Rarely Pure and Never Simple

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Rarely Pure and Never Simple

by cactus_junkie

Summary

Twenty-seven year old Will Graham is a Baltimore escort with a dark past that follows him everywhere he goes. Forty-eight year Doctor Hannibal Lecter is drowning in the monotony of every day life. After a chance meeting, both learn that the truth is rarely pure and never simple - especially when it comes to matters of the heart.

Notes

Soko - Replaceable Heads

It's Just Cheap Lust

The faucet dripped, antagonising every one of Will's last frayed nerves. He closed his eyes, stretching his neck back and exhaling loudly. Will gripped the side of the bathroom countertop a little tighter as he heard his client make an ungodly loud *snort* as he bent over the small, neatly wracked up line on the little pocket mirror set on the side. His client wrenched backwards, jaw clenching and tipping his own head back as he stood up straight. He blinked rapidly, scrunching his nose and wiping at it with the back of his hand.

"Here," he murmured softly, scooping a tiny metal spoon-like device into the neat little box of white powder he'd fished out of his suit pocket.

He held the loaded metal device aloft to Will's face, eyes wide, blown and expectant. Will fixed his face into a smile immediately, demurely wrapping his long, pale fingers around his client's hand that held the spoon out as he shifted forwards carefully. He inhaled deeply, the sensation of the cocaine rushing up his right nostril overwhelming to his already over-stimulated mind. It wouldn't kick in just yet, but the apprehension and how on edge Will already was was enough to make his palms sweat and his pulse race.

A soft chuckle; "Good boy."

Will righted himself, letting go of his client's hand and smiling widely at him. "Shall we go back?"

His client - a Mr. Christian Naylor, wealthy CEO of some company or other that Will had long forgotten the name of - gave him a hungry look. He was in his late fifties, just a little taller than Will and attractive enough for Will to find him bearable enough on top of his smarmy personality.

"I'm starting to wonder whether I want to go back at all," Christian smiled darkly, his gaze lingering on Will's lips. "I have half a mind to take you into one of the stalls right now and have you on your knees."

Will stopped himself from rolling his eyes, instead smiling wider and stepping closer to him until their chests and groins were flush. "Don't you want to save that for when we get back to your hotel room? We still have *all* night ahead of us."

Christian's fingers gripped the point of Will's chin, holding his gaze. Will didn't look away, refusing to back down from his stare despite every fibre of his being screaming at him to do so.

"My mistake, my dear. I forgot boys like you aren't just for brief encounters in bathroom cubicles," Christian chuckled, his spare hand roaming up the back of Will's neck to thread his fingers through his curls.

If only you knew, Will thought to himself grimly. Instead, he pressed his hips even more firmly against Christian's. "The wait is worth it, I promise."

A slight grind of his hips against the older man's, and then Will stepped free of his hold and headed to the door, glancing over his shoulder at Christian teasingly on his way. "Let's go. The auction is starting soon, Mr. Naylor."

Christian righted his tie and followed Will out of the bathroom. Will took a deep breath as he felt the cocaine start to kick in and put his best smile on.

"You *must* tell us more of your time in Paris as a young man, Hannibal."

Hannibal raised his champagne to his lips, slowly sipping and smiling at his crowd of acquaintances that were hanging on to his every word. Americans really were so easily enthralled by tales of Europe, Hannibal mused to himself.

"Perhaps later Veronica," Hannibal suggested, straightening his posture a little. "I do believe the auction is due to start very soon."

She clucked her tongue at him but smiled, laying an overly jewel encrusted and overfamiliar hand on his bicep. "So modest. Fine, let's take our seats. This is what we've all come here for tonight, after all."

Not all of us , Hannibal corrected her mentally.

Hannibal took his seat at the table, admiring the calligraphy of how his name had been hand written out for his seat placement. Glancing around the room, Hannibal pondered who would be the first to start making ridiculous bids and forget the purpose of this evening's charity fundraiser, all intents of helping the less fortunate forgotten in the wake of posturing who had the most money to throw away.

It amused Hannibal to no end.

A hush settled across the room as the lights dimmed slightly in the large dining room of the Sagamore Pendry hotel that had been decorated and converted for tonight's Winter themed fundraiser ball, hosted by Baltimore's bored senseless socialite housewives. Said housewives were currently fluttering about on the stage, smoothing down their dresses and adjusting their hair as what looked like their elected leader stepped towards the podium, her thousands of dollars worth of veneers blinding in the spotlight.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she began breathily, breasts heaving in her too-tight dress, her Botox looking fresh and rigid, "welcome to our third annual Winter fundraiser for Sisters of Mary World Villages, a charity that so many of us hold dear to our hearts…"

Hannibal had already zoned out - his attention had been captured by something else entirely.

The tall, mahogany doors at the back of the room leading to the hallway to the rest rooms were swinging in their frame as two men appeared, walking closely together. The first was older, roughly around Hannibal's age. He was olive skinned, his still full head of hair slicked back in a similar fashion to Hannibal's own, except his was jet black, streaked with grey at the temples. His suit was tailor made by the look of it, everything from his cufflinks to his

watch oozing an extortionate price tag. He was a handsome man, deep set brown eyes and a strong jaw, still in good physical shape too.

What Hannibal was really interested in though, was the young man trailing behind him.

He was a little shorter than his companion and *clearly* much younger. Hannibal didn't think he could be much older than his mid twenties. His own suit was well fit, not quite as expensive looking as his companion's, but pricey enough to blend in with the kind of folk that was present at the fundraiser. His face was clean shaven, his jaw and the column of his neck looking as though it were chiselled from marble in the dimmed lighting. A breathing, living Bernini before Hannibal's very own eyes. His hair was a halo of dark curls, framing his pale face perfectly. Hannibal gazed upon his prominent cheekbones, his startling blue eyes, long lashes fanning around them.

He was magnificent to behold.

Magnificent, and so incredibly *rude* for stumbling into the room when the auction was beginning. The longer Hannibal watched the pair, the more he saw.

The older man was clearly intoxicated in more ways than one, his jaw twitching and swinging between sips of his champagne as the pair took their allocated seats, two tables over from Hannibal. Hannibal could just about make out how wide both of their pupils were, irises giving way to black. The younger man seemed somewhat jittery, fidgeting in his chair, and what became even more apparently obvious was that they were not *just* companions. Hannibal had wondered if they were family, co-workers, even friends, but quickly understood the nature of their relationship when he watched the older man drape an arm around the young man's shoulders, lean in close to say something into his ear and squeeze the younger man's thigh tightly with his spare hand.

Ownership, publicly displayed. *Look at me, and how young and beautiful this boy hanging off my arm is. Aren't I better than you all, to have such a creature in my hands?*

The boy smiled darkly at him, whispering something back and playing coyly with the heavy gold Signet ring on the older man's right little finger. Hannibal found himself itching to know what they were saying to each other.

The boy was clearly one of two things: a sugar baby or a whore. Not that Hannibal cared either way what he was, as it was interesting regardless to watch such obscenity in plain sight at one of Baltimore's high-society gatherings. Most of the guests at the fundraiser tonight preferred to keep their mistresses and rent boys a secret.

Dragging his attention back to the auction, Hannibal tried his best to ignore the pair and enjoy the imminent peacocking that was about to take place.

"Next, we have the most delicate, beautiful necklace," the woman on stage announced as her assistant held the jewellery underneath the visualiser camera that was projected onto the wall behind for all to see clearly. "Made from white gold with a Marquise cut, three carat diamond pendant, we'll start bids at nine-thousand dollars."

Will could feel Christian's eyes on him again, suspecting what was coming next. He turned to meet his gaze, smiling unassumingly.

"I want to see you wearing that necklace whilst I fuck you later tonight," Christian mouthed against the skin of Will's neck, spread hand sliding up towards Will's crotch.

"Careful Christian," Will murmured back, forcing himself to smirk and bat his lashes. "I wouldn't want you to do anything rash with your money."

Christian took the bait, of course, as Will knew he would. Christian wanted to show off, wanted Will and everyone else to know how wealthy he was. Who was Will to stop him? He was an escort, for God's sake, it was hardly the first or last time a middle aged man had splashed stupid amounts of money on him to impress him or his friends. Christian had even insisted on paying for Will's suit tonight, so if the man wanted to purchase a diamond necklace for Will to wear when they fucked later, Will saw no reason to stop him. Christian had money to burn, and Will would pawn the necklace off once Christian inevitably either grew bored of him or grew so obsessive over him that Will was forced to cut off all contact with the man.

It was always the same, Will had come to learn. His clients were *always* satisfied enough to hire Will over multiple occasions, but it always ended. Their attention strayed to a new young, pretty thing and Will was politely forgotten about, or they formed an infatuation so deep with Will that Will had to change his number and begrudgingly move in to his manager's apartment for a few weeks whilst things died down - the constant buzz of his apartment's intercom from an obsessed client acting irrationally was enough to send him scuttling away to his manager's home to hide.

The longest Will had ever kept a client was a year, and even that had ended badly when the client's wife found out - they'd moved out of state almost overnight, it seemed, but not before Will received a drunken, threatening phone call from said wife.

"Don't worry, Will," Christian smirked, raising his bid card high in the air, "it's only a few pennies."

"Do I hear thirty-one thousand?"

Christian's jaw clenched tightly, his hand twitching on the bid card but staying on the table. Will looked over to the man who had immediately begun outbidding Christian the moment bids started for the necklace.

He was the picture of elegance, reclined gracefully in his chair with one leg crossed over the other. Even sitting, Will could see his suit clung to him perfectly, accentuating his broad shoulders and narrow waist. His hair was a tawny-grey, smoothed back over his head carefully. His amber eyes glistened in the dim lights, his striking side profile keeping Will captivated.

"Thirty-one thousand? No?" the woman called out one last time. "Well then, sold to the very generous Dr Hannibal Lecter for thirty-thousand dollars!"

Amber met sapphire, and Will's blood froze in his veins, his heart in his throat. The slightest twitch of a smile on Lecter's mouth, eyes still locked together, had Will nearly shuddering. A squeeze to his knee from Christian's insistent hand, and Will tore his gaze away.

"That man must be an idiot," Christian muttered under his breath. "He knows damn well that the necklace isn't worth that much, he just wanted to prove a point."

Will pushed a soothing expression on to his face, linking his fingers through Christian's over his knee. "Don't worry about him. Some people have more money than sense."

Christian nodded, swigging back more champagne. Will desperately tried to ignore the feel of those eyes digging into the back of his skull so persistently as the night continued and the next stupidly priced piece of jewellery was brought up to the stage.

See You Right Back Here Tomorrow, For The Next Round

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Pierrot The Clown

Will was always aware of when there was a pair of eyes set on him, a gaze burrowing into the side of his head, the back of his skull. It was what made him so good at scoping out potential new clients when his bookings from his manager were running dry; he knew people liked to look, and he knew exactly how they wanted him to look. He knew how to keep their interest.

Except he didn't need a new client tonight; the widowed and wealthy Ms. Marincic, who had been a regular customer of Will's for the last three years, had paid him to go to the opera tonight and she *always* tipped him handsomely. It was Will's preferred kind of escort job; let an older woman like Ms. Marincic hang off his arm all night whilst he fetched her flutes of champagne, pretend to enjoy and understand every moment of tonight's *The Barber of Seville* performance and occasionally caress her hair or her hand. Things that her husband would never have done with her when he was alive, but things she had always craved and wanted and ended up resenting him for, even in death. So much so that she deemed fit to spend her dead husband's money on handsome young escorts like Will to make up for what she had gone without during her marriage.

But the best part? The night ended as soon as Ms. Marincic's driver dropped him off on his street (never directly outside of his apartment building), and they went their separate ways. There was no kissing, embracing, and there most definitely was no sex. Will could go home with a sizable cheque making its way to his bank account, a few hundred dollars extra in his wallet, warm and fuzzy from the alcohol and feel *clean* .

Not that the sex always made him feel dirty; some of his best nights had been spent with his head between a woman's legs who'd paid him for 'extra' at the end of the night, or riding his client's cock to ecstasy as daylight broke through the windows of some lavish hotel room. But his last cocaine-fuelled fuck with Christian Naylor after the charity fund-raiser auction had left him feeling cheap and used. It had left him feeling close to what he'd tried so hard to desperately leave behind.

Will's hypersensitivity to the sensation of being watched, as much as it was useful at times, was proving rather unfortunate tonight. He could feel someone watching him, feel their eyes like a heavy hand on his shoulder, and as much as he was trying to pay all of his attention to Ms. Marincic, he was struggling. He daren't let his gaze wander and catch the eye of whoever was ogling at him - Ms. Marincic paid him far too well for his attention to be on anyone other than her this evening.

He cleared his throat softly, shifting in his seat to lean towards Ms. Marincic and graze his knuckles along the back of her hand softly. “Would you mind if I stepped out for a minute? I just wanted to use the bathroom before the interval ended.”

She smiled at Will, appreciating the heavy-lidded gaze that warmed her skin as he looked at her. “Of course. You don’t need to ask; I’ll see you back here shortly?”

He delicately raised her hand in his, skimming his lips over the back of her hand with a feather light touch. “I won’t be too long.”

He left Ms. Marincic sitting smugly, sipping her drink, basking in the sea of gazes and raised eyebrows at the attention she’d garnered. Will had that effect; people liked to stare and watch no matter who he was with. His clients liked for him to be coveted by others.

Will’s composure broke as soon as he was alone in the marble tiled bathroom, the hazy glow of wall mounted mini-chandeliers a relief to his tiring mind. He gripped the sink, his head hanging low between his shoulders.

He often wondered how much longer he could keep this up for; escorting was a dream compared to the hell hole he’d dragged himself out of, but it still *sapped* his energy at the ripe old age of twenty-seven. He knew tonight when he fell into bed he would lie staring at the ceiling in the dark, unable to switch off the constant hypervigilance he had to keep up all night, from spending every minute seeing himself through the eyes of others.

His stomach churned.

“Are you feeling unwell?”

The voice made him flinch, his head snapping up. Will hadn’t even heard the door open; the velvety, low voice that had broken him out of his spiralling thoughts had shattered his hazy state.

Will blinked rapidly, taking in the man before him. The man who, much to his dismay, Will immediately recognised. How could he forget?

Will’s face twitched into a not-quite-there smile, straightening his posture. “I’m sorry, I didn’t notice you come in. I’m fine, thank you, it’s just a minor headache.”

Sphinx-like amber eyes bore into him, the man’s blank expression seeming almost sinister in the glow of the bathroom lights. Will had to stop himself from letting his mind trawl towards him, stop himself from trying to see how the stranger perceived him.

“My apologies. I only ask out of concern. I used to be a surgeon; it’s somewhat of a hard habit to drop, checking in on the wellbeing of others,” the stranger replied in amusement, head tilting slightly. “Forgive me if I’m wrong, but you look familiar. Have we crossed paths before?”

Will aborted the nervous swallow his throat nearly made; he could tell that this man was not to be trifled with, and that the slightest twitch or shaky breath from Will would be

disadvantageous to himself. “No, no, not at all; it’s kind of you to be worried about a stranger.”

Will dodged the question, squaring his shoulders back a little bit and stepping towards the stranger. “I’m so sorry, but I have to get going. I hope you enjoy the rest of your evening.”

The man said nothing as Will moved past him; Will thought he almost imagined the subtle inhale of breath from the stranger as he went past him, *smelling* Will. Will chose to ignore it, telling himself that this man must just be a little bit odd - who wasn’t, after all?

But then, just after Will was past him and stretching for the door handle, the man spoke.

“You keep quite the clientele. Tell me, will I be seeing you at any other upcoming events?”

Will froze.

“Excuse me?” Will asked stiffly.

The man turned slightly, looking over his shoulder at Will with hooded eyes and a lazy smile. “I only noticed you for the first time at the fundraiser event last week. And now here you are again, with a different client. It just made me wonder, how many other times have we been in each other’s presence and been oblivious of it?”

Their eyes locked for a moment that dragged out for eternity.

Will clenched and then unclenched his jaw. “Is there a problem?”

The stranger smiled wider. “Of course not; nobody is breaking any laws by paying for the company of such an interesting young man as yourself, are they? Because that is what they’re paying for, isn’t it? Your company?”

Inside, Will felt a mixture of sour anger and fear; anger that this man had called him out on his work whilst he was on the damn job, as it was none of his business, but fear at the fact he probably knew Will wasn’t exactly the kind of escort who said no to extras at the end of the night. The kind of extras that made the work that he did illegal.

Instead of letting this show, Will tapped into the man’s arrogance. He stepped forwards, keeping his gaze on the stranger’s face and smiling almost smugly, pleasantly yet sickly sweet. “Why? Are you interested?”

The man went quiet, face blank again as he assessed Will, gaze flickering over his stature, trailing over his lips. “As a matter of fact, I am interested. You intrigue me; you’ve appeared almost out of nowhere within a social circle I’ve been a part of for almost a decade, and judging by the new suit you’re wearing, your clients must be paying quite the fee.”

Will hummed, eyes assessing the stranger right back. “You seem to have quite the interest in my work. Wondering how much I cost?”

A ripple of something heated and dark appeared in those amber eyes for a brief moment, vanishing as quickly as it appeared. “Perhaps. Perhaps I’m curious about the whole idea of

what you are and what you do. I wonder who you really are behind the act your clients pay you to put on."

Will smiled viciously. "I'm afraid I have someone waiting for me. I'm also sorry to tell you that you'll have to sate that curiosity elsewhere because my books are full. Besides; *I don't find you that interesting* ."

With that Will turned and left, but not before he heard a soft chuckle followed by the words: "You will."

Cast a Line With a Velvet Glove

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Bruise Pristine

Will felt *terrible* after the opera. After being dropped off after the opera by Ms. Marincic, Will had stumbled drunkenly into his apartment and fallen into a fretful sleep, still half dressed in his suit. His dreams were plagued by the stranger in the opera house bathroom, of the *smug* smirk and those knowing amber eyes. Will had awoken to a pounding on his apartment door at around 9am the next morning to find a disgruntled looking landlord.

“Rent’s due, William,” Rick grunted at him over the threshold, arms folded over his chest. “I’m not giving you an extension on it this time.”

Will dragged a hand over his face, blinking blearily. “Rent… yeah, of course, I…”

Rick sighed, his shoulders sagging. “Listen kid, if you haven’t got enough in the bank to set up a standing order each month, you ought to think about moving somewhere more affordable. I’ll let you off the hook and take it in cash again if you got it.”

“Just give me a minute,” Will mumbled, turning and heading back to his bedroom.

He returned soon after, digging around the suit jacket he’d worn last night and found his wallet, still waking up. His head was throbbing. He’d forgotten entirely about rent, just like he did nearly every month.

“Here,” Will mumbled, drawing out the entirety of the cash Ms. Marincic had tipped him last night, not wanting to meet Rick’s eyes. “I’ll transfer you the last $100 by the end of today. I’m sorry.”

Rick took the wad of bills. “I never asked where you always get these stacks of cash from because I didn’t wanna know. Maybe just think about making yourself look a little more above board, hm?”

Will smiled tightly, his blood beginning to boil. “Sure. Is there anything else you need Rick?”

“No. We’re all good. Just make sure you get the last $100 you owe for your rent wired into my account by the end of today.”

“Will do,” Will called out, immediately shutting the door in Rick’s face and locking it again.

Will leant against the closed door, listening to Rick's retreating footsteps with his eyes closed and his head tilted back. Will let out a long breath, feeling the panic starting to creep into his gut as he realised just how fucked he was for the rest of the month now his rent had been paid.

"Fuckin' *Rick* ," Will hissed out underneath his breath, finally moving away from his front door to crawl back into bed.

He'd have to go crawling back to his manager tonight and beg for a client, which was the last thing he wanted to do.

Elijah raised an eyebrow. "Another client? But you just had a job last night, Will. You don't have another client booked in for at least another two weeks."

Will paled. "Surely there's someone. There's got to be something between now and my next booking."

"I've assigned everyone to their bookings already for the month," Elijah sighed, sitting back in his seat at the kitchen island, the marble countertops gleaming from the beam off of the lights. "Did something go wrong with Ms. Marincic last night? Is that why you need the extra cash?"

Will relented with his pacing back and forth in front of the kitchen island, resigning himself to sitting down on the stool opposite Elijah and eyeing the whiskey behind the man in the drinks display cabinet.

Will glanced at his watch; it was 11:17 am. Probably too early to sink into a depressive drinking state, he reasoned with himself. Maybe later…

"Nothing went wrong with her. It went fine, exactly the same as it always does. It's just that my rent was due today and I paid it but now I'm really… it puts me in a tricky position."

Elijah drummed his fingers on the countertop. "A tricky enough position that you can't ride it out for two weeks? How bad *is* it?"

Will cleared his throat. "I owe Crawford. That time of the month again."

Elijah's face softened and he sat back, sighing. He ran a slender hand through the thick shock of red hair on his head. "Will…"

"I know," Will muttered, holding his head in his hands. "I have to pay him though, Elijah. He'll come looking for me otherwise."

"It's been so long since it happened though, aren't you sure it would be safe to just slowly stop paying him?"

"I still owe him a… considerable amount," Will sighed, fidgeting.

"All these years and you still haven't paid him back?" Elijah quizzed him.

“It’s not like I haven’t been trying,” Will gritted out through his teeth. “I stole fifty grand from him for God’s sake, it’s not like I can pay that off in the blink of an eye.”

“And so you’re living like a pauper whilst he gets virtually all of your wage, which is a fucking *lot* , Will,” Elijah summarised. “You sure he isn’t your pimp after all?”

Will’s jaw clenched and he bristled. “Listen, I came here for… I don’t fucking know why I came here to be honest, Elijah. But I certainly didn’t come here for you to trivialise the shit show I’m constantly trying to get myself out of. If you’ve got no new clients then I’ll be heading out.”

Elijah ‘tsk’ed his tongue. “Don’t be like that. You know I’m not trivialising anything, you idiot. I don’t like your situation either, you know that? I just wish you’d let me help you - ”

“We’ve had this conversation too many times before,” Will cut him off. “I don’t want your help. You’ve done enough for me.”

“Heaven forbid you trust me,” Elijah sighed, rolling his eyes. “I wouldn’t want a penny of it back Will, and you know that damn well. You’re not making a martyr out of yourself by doing this.”

“I’m not trying to make a martyr out of myself,” Will grunted back, heaving himself out of the kitchen stool. “The point is that it’s my issue to fix, not anyone else’s. Nothing good comes from borrowing money from people to fix your own mess. I don’t want to owe anyone another damn dime in my life.”

“Stubborn son of a bitch,” Elijah muttered, shaking his head. “You know the other boys live a life of luxury doing this job? The clients I book for you and the other boys pay serious money, and yet here you are living just like you used to when I first met you.”

Will flinched. “That’s not true. I’m in a better place now, and you know how grateful I am to you for helping me. I just can’t accept any more of your help.”

“I’m not going to fuck you over Will,” Elijah insisted. “Why is it so hard for you to accept that I care about your situation? I thought I’d proved myself to be a decent guy by now.”

Will reached for his coat where he’d left it on the back of the kitchen stool, slowly making his exit. “You are a decent guy. You’re professional. You treat me well, you’ve never lied to me. But I promised myself that I’d get myself out of the fuck up I caused; I can’t let anyone else do that for me.”

Elijah remained silent, only watching Will as he donned his coat and shoved his hands into his pocket. Will sighed, turning to walk to the front door.

“See you, Elijah,” Will mumbled over his shoulder. “Sorry to bother you and turn up unannounced. I’ll call ahead next time.”

“Just look after yourself Will,” Elijah replied, his voice grave - it sounded almost like a warning. “You know I’ll find out if you go out turning tricks, so don’t even think about

heading out there tonight. Remember your contract."

"I've never once broken the terms of my contract," Will snapped back, pausing by the front door and glaring back at Elijah. "Just let me know if any new clients become available, alright? I'll take them, whoever they are. I can't afford to be picky right now."

"I'll call if anything comes up," Elijah promised.

Will had vanished out the door before Elijah could even properly bid him farewell, not a trace of him left in the apartment.

Will managed to scrounge together enough money to pay the remaining $100 he owed his landlord Rick by the evening, but was then faced with the realisation he had barely any money left to pay for any groceries for the next few weeks. The money from Ms. Marincic still hadn't transferred through into his account yet, which was nothing unusual, but Will was still getting steadily more anxious about the fact he was due to pay Crawford very soon and he needed to come up with the cash.

Setting out into the streets to try and make a few dollars this evening wasn't an option; he'd ruin the only good thing he'd ever had by doing that, breaking the terms of his contract with Elijah. Will and all of the other boys working for Elijah knew what happened to those that went back on the streets - they were cut off immediately, disowned and cast out as if they'd never existed. Will had known it to happen before in the last three years he'd been working for Elijah; an escort would, for whatever reason, try and turn tricks on the street behind Elijah's back and within a few days they were pleading with him to take them back, give them one more chance, once they realised how good they'd had it with Elijah. They were always met with icy silence.

With no other options left on the cards, Will had headed out into the evening to at least see if he could get some lonely prick to fund his evening plans of drowning his sorrows. There was nothing in his contract that stated people couldn't buy drinks for him.

Will knew exactly how to dress and where to go; working for Elijah had been an eye-opening experience over the last few years. His mind was now a catalogue of high-end bars, members only clubs, exclusive restaurants, resorts and hotels. He could scope out a room and find a target with ease, lure them in with a curious, small smile, as if *they* were the prize, the desirable ones.

Will settled into the nearest empty booth he could find; it was the perfect spot, actually. Near enough to the door that people would see him as soon as he walked in, and close enough to the bar that patrons would only have to glance over and see him all by himself, ready and waiting for company.

It didn't take long for Will to feel the air stir around him, hear footsteps approach him and the swish of fabric sliding against the leather upholstery of the booth as someone sat down opposite him. Will looked up slowly through his lashes, a curious smile on his mouth.

The smile quickly turned ashen and Will's heart sank.

“Good evening,” the stranger from the opera house bathroom and the charity fundraiser greeted him pleasantly, smugly.

Will tilted his chin, narrowing his eyes. “Are you following me?”

The stranger raised an eyebrow, still smirking a little. “How could I possibly do that? I don’t even know your name. Besides, I could ask the same of you. You’ve appeared in the same vicinity as me quite frequently over the last few weeks.”

“You’ll have to forgive me for finding it strange that you were at the opera last night and not even 24 hours later you’re sitting opposite me in this bar, of all the places you could be in Baltimore right now,” Will replied sourly.

The stranger smiled softly, closed mouthed, tilting his head in curiosity as he studied Will. Will looked right back, reluctantly observing how handsome the man before him was.

The stranger extended a hand across the table between them, his smile unwavering. “Doctor Hannibal Lecter.”

Will stared at the outstretched hand before him, debating whether to shake his hand or not. He could be an asshole and this man, Hannibal, would undoubtedly leave. Or he could at least be a *little* pleasant and get a few drinks out of the guy. It didn’t hurt that he was easy on the eye, too.

Eventually, Will slipped his hand into Hannibal’s waiting one and shook it firmly, once. He remained quiet.

Hannibal cocked an eyebrow again, smiling with his teeth this time. “Usually the protocol is to tell me your name too.”

Will sat back, studying the doctor before him. “Everything is a transaction, Doctor Lecter.”

“Ah, I see. And what do you require in exchange for the revealing of your name?”

“A drink would be nice, to start with,” Will responded, eyes dark and glinting in the dim overhead lights of the bar.

“Of course. How rude of me,” Hannibal chastised himself half-heartedly, beckoning a waiter over.

Hannibal ordered for the both of them, not letting Will choose his own drink. Will nearly rolled his eyes; if this was how Hannibal wanted to play this game, then fine. Will was a seasoned professional.

Thankfully, Hannibal had ordered them both whiskey, neat over ice. Will sipped the amber liquid carefully, not taking his eyes off of the doctor.

“Will Graham,” Will murmured eventually, savouring the rich and smoky whiskey on his tongue.

“A pleasure to finally learn your name, Will,” Hannibal hummed in delight, eyes twinkling.

Will decided that the doctor was enjoying this far too much.

“Am I to expect an additional bill at the end of this evening, for joining you for a drink?” Hannibal began, traces of that smug smirk still lingering around his mouth.

Will scoffed. “No, Doctor Lecter. You haven’t booked my company. You’re just buying me a drink, that’s all.”

“Just a drink?” Hannibal repeated. “That’s a shame. I would have liked to have bought you more than one.”

“As long as it’s whiskey that tastes this good, I’ll think about it.”

Hannibal watched him carefully, his strange-coloured eyes travelling over Will’s face. Will had to stop himself from letting the tendrils of his empathy creep towards the other man, to start prying into the doctor’s wants and desires. To feel for him and reach inside and absorb his thoughts as if they were his own.

“I would like to apologise for our encounter last night,” Hannibal confessed into the air between them, voice low and sincere. “I had no intention of offending you. I was merely curious about you, and in my curiosity I have unwillingly gained your scorn. I hope you can accept that I meant no harm.”

Will swished the ice around in his glass of whiskey, looking up at Hannibal through hooded eyes. “Do you always talk like you just got chewed up and spat out of a Jane Austen novel?”

That triggered an amused chuckle from the doctor. “You’ll have to forgive that, too. As you can probably tell, English is not my first language. I only ever learnt how to speak it formally in my youth.”

Will snorted. “Alright. I forgive you, for last night and for sounding like a nineteenth-century deuteragonist.”

“Demoted to the role of deuteragonist? I don’t even get to be the protagonist?”

“Obviously not,” Will sniped back, charmingly and witty. “I would be the protagonist.”

Hannibal smiled at him and it warmed something in Will’s gut that made him squeamish, trying to battle the blush that he was so scared of creeping across his face in case Hannibal saw it. Will hid his flustered state with another swig of whiskey.

“I suppose I should apologise too. I wasn’t particularly amicable to you last night at the opera,” Will told him, somewhat begrudgingly. “I’m just not a fan of being approached whilst I have a client.”

“Understandable,” Hannibal conceded. “Although I must confess, I don’t understand much about how your profession works, the etiquette and norms of it all.”

Will shrugged. “Well, you wouldn’t. Not if you’ve never hired an escort before.”

“So what is the protocol, exactly?” Hannibal enquired, genuinely curious.

“Well, approaching an escort who's quite obviously got a client that evening usually isn’t the best idea,” Will replied dryly, raising an eyebrow. “Clients don’t like to feel like what they’ve paid for is being encroached upon.”

“No,” Hannibal murmured, eyes sweeping over Will’s form. “I can’t imagine they do.”

Will suppressed the shudder that he felt creeping at the base of his spine at Hannibal’s dark, covetous gaze. If only it wasn’t so complicated… if only he could just let Hannibal buy him enough whiskey to get him drunk enough to take him back to his shitty little apartment and let Hannibal undress him and fuck him into his mattress, like normal a one-night stand.

They were both quite clearly attracted to each other, circling each other like animals thrown into an arena. Who would be the first to take the initial lunge, the first swipe… Will didn’t know.

“How do you meet your clients?” Hannibal asked, pressing further. “Like this? Waiting for someone to notice you and decide they want to pay for your services?”

Will gave him a sour look. “No. I have a manager.”

“I see. Your manager makes your bookings.”

“Yes. Everything goes through him. I can pass details of a prospective client on to him, or they can contact him if I pass along his details to them, but my manager ultimately decides who we work with.”

“He has multiple escorts working for him?”

Will drained the last of his whiskey. “Yes. It’s a business. Wouldn’t be a very lucrative business venture with only one employee, would it?”

“And is he fair to you?” Hannibal asked, a slither of concern laid beneath his curious questioning.

“He is. I wouldn’t be working for him, otherwise,” Will assured him. “I’m lucky to work for him. The life of an escort isn’t exactly a safe one. Elijah keeps us safe.”

“Lucky to work for him, despite the fact he controls your work?”

“Isn’t that what every boss does?” Will smiled dryly. “Elijah helped me get out of a bad situation I was trapped in. He vets all clients personally, runs background checks on them. He doesn’t let any of us escort anyone he thinks might even be slightly dangerous. Besides, we always have the choice before the booking. We can say no, and he’ll pass the booking on to someone else. Elijah knows we’re an asset - can’t run a business well if you don’t take care of the very people that make you money now, can you?”

Hannibal glanced down at the empty glass before Will. “Would you like another?”

Will smiled slyly. “I would. Thank you, Hannibal.”

Hannibal leaned forwards over the table between them, fingers brushing against Will’s where they rested against the empty glass. Hannibal slid the glass away from Will’s hand, their eyes locked together.

“You’re welcome, Will.”

A Careless Slipping of The Tongue

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Flesh Mechanic

Will lost count of how many whiskies deep he was. Hannibal simply kept ordering him more when he noticed Will's glass was empty. Will liked it; he liked Hannibal.

He told him as much.

"I like you, Doctor Lecter," Will announced, whiskey loosening his tongue.

Not quite drunk enough to let his guard down, but drunk enough to let the doctor get a glimpse of what it would be like if he paid for Will's company for the evening. Which, ultimately, was Will's goal - the man clearly had money to burn, and if Will was lucky, he'd pay extra to fuck him at the end of their time together. A date with Hannibal and the extra money from sex would cover his monthly payment to Crawford.

"Well, that's a considerable improvement from where we left off last evening at the opera," Hannibal observed, smiling. "I'm glad you've come around."

Will hummed. "I don't ever do this, by the way. Let strangers have my company like… this."

"This being…?"

Will sat back against the booth, eyeing Hannibal up. "I don't date like regular people. I don't do relationships. I don't do one-night stands or letting strangers chat me up in bars and buy me drinks in the hope that I've found the person I'm going to settle down with. There's no white picket fence and nuclear family on my horizon."

"No flings or love affairs?" Hannibal murmured inquisitively.

Will shook his head, looking down at the way Hannibal's long, dexterous fingers stroked the rim of his glass. "No."

"What a pity."

"Is it?" Will countered, cocking his head to the side. "Relationships are messy. What I do isn't; my clients pay me to hang off their arm and look pretty, stroke their ego for the evening, and then it ends. They get what they want and I get what I need, then we both go our separate ways."

“You get what you ‘need’... but what about what you want?” Hannibal pointed out, frowning a little.

“What I want… I can’t afford to want, Doctor Lecter.”

“So you limit yourself intentionally? Are you punishing yourself for something, Will? Stuck in a cycle you can’t get out of, because you think you’re too far gone to want the normal things the rest of us do?”

Will smiled, narrowing his eyes. “I should have known you were a shrink.”

“I’m sorry. I can’t turn mine off anymore than you can yours.”

“Well,” Will sighed, smiling lightly, tipping his glass towards the other man, “here’s to always being turned on.”

Hannibal replied with a smirk.

Hannibal was just as good of a kisser as Will imagined him to be; his lips pressed firmly against Will’s, his broad palms sliding around Will exactly where he liked to be touched, as if the doctor already knew. He pressed Will against the wall, one leg slotted between Will’s and theirs groins flush together. Will could feel the length of the doctor’s cock hardening in his pants.

He kissed Will breathless, the pair of them breaking apart with heaving chests and blown pupils. Will shakily placed a hand over Hannibal’s chest, partly because he wanted to keep touching the older man and partly because he needed to be able to push Hannibal back if he tried to kiss him again.

“We shouldn’t have done that,” Will protested softly, voice light and airy and sounding strange to his own ears. “I’m sorry.”

Hannibal skimmed his lips over Will’s forehead. “And why not? Surely the world won’t stop turning because of a kiss?”

Will swallowed, putting pressure on the hand he had on Hannibal’s chest and pressing the man backwards, breaking them apart and sorely missing the flush pressure of Hannibal’s hips against his. But, Hannibal was just as gentlemanly in Will’s rejection of him as he had been all evening; he nodded, carefully stepping back at a respectful distance and clasping his hands behind his back. When Will looked up into his eyes, they were dark. They were hungry.

“I have a contract, Hannibal. I can’t…”

“A contract that forbids you from kissing people that you want to kiss?” Hannibal nearly drawled, sounding far from impressed.

Will sighed, his shoulders slumping; of course it sounded ridiculous to Hannibal. It should to Will as well, but he’d been in this line of work for far too long now to find these things strange. Will tipped his head back against the hard brick wall behind him of the bar they’d

been in, the pair of them alone on the quiet street, now deep into the night and lit by street lights.

“Part of my contract is that I can’t enter into romantic relationships,” Will confessed to the night sky, head still tipped back and eyes half closed.

“And if I pulled my wallet out now and handed over whatever amount you charge for this kind of thing?” Hannibal asked, droplets of compulsion and irritation marring his voice.

Will smiled at the stars and then looked back at Hannibal. “It would still be a no. Everything has to go through my manager. You arrange to see me through him. He sets up the booking between us and you take me out somewhere and we all pretend you’re simply paying for my company. Then at the end of the night you ask if there are any extras to my services and I say yes. Then you pay for those extras and you can do whatever you like with me for however long you want me for - within reason, of course. Then I leave whatever hotel or apartment you paid me to come to and we all go about our business as if you didn’t just pay me for sex, and we all pretend everything was above board.”

Hannibal remained still, silent, eyes fixed on Will. “I see.”

Will swallowed, audibly this time. He felt as if he might cry, which startled him. He hadn’t cried in so long. “Do you?”

Hannibal stepped forwards, brushing a curl away from Will’s face. Their gaze didn’t break: Hannibal itched to lean forwards and kiss this strange man before him again. Will wanted Hannibal to pull him close, run his lips over his neck and take him away. Take him away anywhere, he didn’t care.

Instead, Will blinked, looking down to his jacket pocket and retrieved his wallet. He pulled out Elijah’s business card and held it aloft between the two of them. Hannibal plucked it from his fingers, observing it without any expression on his face. Will found it maddening.

He found a lot of things about Hannibal maddening. He also found that this was another thing he liked about the doctor.

Will was the first to step away, retreating from the doctor’s tall frame reluctantly. “Thank you for tonight, Doctor Lecter. I hope… I hope you enjoyed your evening as much as I enjoyed mine.”

Hannibal looked up at him, desperately wanting to snatch Will by the wrist and pull him close again. He watched Will shiver in the winter evening air, wanting so badly to encase him in his arms again, warm Will’s lips with his own. He didn’t; he stayed where he was, watching the escort.

“Let me call you a cab,” Hannibal requested, wanting Will to stay with him for just a moment longer. “It’s cold and it’s late.”

Will smiled and winked at him. “I’m a big boy, Doctor Lecter. I can get home perfectly fine, don’t worry.”

“I would much prefer to call you a cab,” Hannibal insisted, still remaining in the spot he’d been stood in since Will had pushed him away. “Please.”

Will shook his head. “You’ve done enough for me tonight already. I appreciate it, but I should get going.”

“Alright,” Hannibal sighed, knowing that pressing a creature like Will was bound to backfire. “I hope you get home safely, Will.”

“You too, Hannibal,” Will returned, eyes seeming sad and distant as they stood staring at each other. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight,” Hannibal politely responded, the skin of his palms itching as he watched Will turn and slowly walk away.

He briefly glanced over his shoulder as he retreated, seeing Hannibal still stood there watching him. A few more paces and Will couldn’t help but look back over his shoulder again; Hannibal was gone.

Will felt the smile crumple on his face, pulling his cell out to check if there had been any new messages from Elijah. There was nothing. Will put his cell back in his pocket and trudged forwards, in the direction of home.

As usual, Will managed to save himself by the skin of his teeth just in time before his next payment was due to Crawford; Ms. Marincic’s payment came through from Elijah after he’d taken his cut and Elijah had managed to get him another client booked in before his next booking in two weeks time.

It was a few days after the evening with Hannibal, and Elijah had a new client contact him looking for an escort to take to a gala at John Hopkins. Will’s whole body sagged with relief.

“I could kiss you,” Will rejoiced, slapping Elijah on the back. “What’s their name then? Give me the rundown.”

“Keep your kisses for your clients,” Elijah grumbled at him, swatting Will away. “His name is Frederick Chilton, forty-six years old, unmarried, no kids. Psychiatrist. Administrator at Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. He’s booked you for five hours, which covers the time of the gala.”

“But he’s gonna pay for extra,” Will sighed, stretching himself out on the cool leather of Elijah’s large cream sofa, feeling his joints pop, wiggling his toes in his sock clad feet.

Elijah shrugged. “Probably. They all do when they see you in person and you work your magic on them.”

Will snorted. “I do no such thing. No magic involved. Just some good old fashioned ego-stroking.”

“Well, this guy seems to be stupidly wealthy. I’m sure he’ll tip well on top of paying for your company and extras at the end of the night.”

Will sat up. “Have there been any other calls? Anyone else?”

Elijah shook his head. “No. Why, you expecting someone?”

Will hesitated, biting his lip. “I might have passed your card along to someone the other evening.”

“What’s their name?”

“Lecter. Save him for me if he calls, will you? He’ll ask for me specifically anyway, but… just don’t give him to any of the other boys, alright?”

“You’re starting to sound like a bottom bitch over there, Will,” Elijah scorned him, smiling lightly nonetheless.

Will rolled his eyes. “That’s because I *am* ; I make you the most money and we all know I’m your favourite.”

Elijah tutted at him. “I don’t have favourites.”

“Sure,” Will snorted, getting to his feet and shoving his feet back into his shoes before he headed for the door.

He paused on his way out, nodding at Elijah. “Let me know what time and where this Chilton shrink wants me to meet him. He sending me anything to wear?”

“He said he’ll have a suit ready and waiting for you at the hotel he’d like to meet you at,” Elijah informed him, turning back to his computer at the desk he sat at, trawling through emails. “Elijah?”

“Mhmm?”

“Thank you for coming through for me,” Will murmured quietly, sincerely. “I really appreciate it.”

Elijah gave him a long, level look. “If getting you another client is all I can do to help, then that’s what I’ll do, Will. But you know I wish you’d just let me pay Crawford off for you.”

“And you know I can’t let you do that,” Will smiled back sharply in defence. “See you later, Elijah.”

That Friday night, Will found himself in the elevator of The Ivy Hotel in Baltimore, heading up to Suite Fourteen to meet Frederick Chilton. He used to get nervous, doing this, when he’d first started working for Elijah three years ago. His heart would race in his chest so hard he thought he might be getting ill, that he wasn’t cut out for being the high end escort Elijah’s clients wanted. But like most things, Will grew accustomed to it. He adapted. Now, he simply

fixed his best smile on his face and strode forwards into the hallway when the elevator doors opened.

He knocked firmly, but politely, waiting. The door opened soon after, revealing Chilton. Will wasn't disappointed, but he wasn't enthralled either. Chilton was not tall and broad shouldered like Lecter, did not have the same melting honey-pot colour in his eyes that sparkled with intrigue at Will's very existence.

No, Chilton's eyes were smug. Pleased. Will was going to make a pretty accessory to accentuate Chilton's presence at the gala tonight. Will could already tell that if Chilton fucked him it would be a tasteless, fumbling encounter that would also thankfully be over in the space of ten minutes, five if he was lucky. He would moan and arch his back for Chilton, all the same; Will was a fantastic actor.

"Hello Doctor Chilton," Will murmured seductively, voice low, starting as he meant to go on. "It's a pleasure to meet you."

Chilton grinned. "Please, come inside. I've been waiting for you."

Will stepped in, still smiling. "I hope I haven't kept you waiting for too long."

A hand around his wrist, holding him in place, lips grazing against his ear and then:

"It was entirely worth the wait, seeing you on the other side of that door," Chilton breathed down his ear.

His breath was hot. Will fought the urge to recoil.

So, it was going to be one of *those* nights.

Allocate Your Sentiment, And Stick It In A Box

Chapter Notes

36 Degrees - Placebo

Hannibal knew he shouldn't have been shocked to have seen Will Graham again so soon - it seemed the universe had decided to finally put them on a path hurtling headfirst towards each other, their proximity no longer a coincidence it seemed. Hannibal still found it strange to think of how many times Will and he may have been so close to each other over the last few years, perhaps sat back to back, without even realising. It wasn't as if Will's clientele had changed suddenly, from what Hannibal could tell. Will had been playing this game with Baltimore's high society for a whole now.

Still, what *did* shock him was to see Will Graham leaning ever so coyly against the bar at the John Hopkins gala with Doctor Frederick Chilton's hand around his tapered waist, accentuated in the new suit Chilton had probably purchased for him. Chilton stood so close to Will that Hannibal had struggled to see who it was that was pawing all over the escort at first, but then Hannibal recognised the hook of Chilton's nose, the light gracing of stubble over his jaw and his posture.

Will hadn't noticed Hannibal yet; he was too busy staring intensely into Chilton's eyes. Hannibal's stomach heaved at the sight of Chilton lifting the olive pierced on a cocktail stick out of his martini and pushing the olive into Will's mouth. Hannibal nearly choked on his breath as he watched Will swallow the olive and capture Chilton's thumb in his mouth and *suck* before letting the digit go, eyes fixed on Chilton's.

A strange concoction of repulsion and arousal fluttered in Hannibal's gut at the sight; he felt his cock swell at the obscenity of Will doing such an obviously sexual act in plain sight, simultaneously shuddering in distaste because it was Chilton's thumb Will had just sucked on.

"Hannibal?"

Hannibal froze, glancing down to Alana Bloom next to him, her arm looped through his. "My apologies, Alana. I was side-tracked for a moment."

Alana followed his gaze to where Will and Chilton stood at the bar, still oblivious to Hannibal's presence. "I'm not surprised. Chilton seems to have brought quite the date with him to the gala tonight."

Hannibal cleared his throat and smiled wolfishly, the cogs in his mind turning as he cyphered through his next moves. "Shall we go and say hello? Let's get a drink whilst we're there."

Alana frowned, opened her mouth to protest but closed it after Hannibal began guiding her in the direction of the bar. Alana found herself intrigued at Hannibal's behaviour, so decided to play along.

"Doctor Lecter!" Chilton greeted a little too loudly, clearly a few martinis deep already.

Hannibal watched in satisfaction as Will's sultry expression all but dropped off of his face, morphing into one of horror, mixed with a shred of guilt. Hannibal purred inside in satisfaction. Good; let Will feel guilty. Hannibal thoroughly intended on playing this game with Will until the escort was the one looking at Hannibal in the way he'd looked at Chilton, except it would be *real* when he gazed at Hannibal with that look in his eyes. The want would be sincere. It already was, from what Hannibal had garnered in the bar the other evening.

"Good evening Doctor Chilton," Hannibal smiled back politely, subtly stroking his thumb over Alana's knuckles where they rested on his arm.

Will's razor sharp gaze caught the movement; Hannibal's gaze locked with the escort for a split second and Will's jaw clenched. Hannibal smiled wider.

"And the lovely Doctor Bloom," Frederick cawed, leaning in to peck her cheek. "What a pleasure to see you both here tonight."

Frederick did not introduce Will; it irked Hannibal somewhat, but didn't seem to phase the escort. Will Graham was probably far too used to being silent, pretty arm candy. Hannibal thought it a great shame; Will's tongue was far too sharp, his wit far too quick to merely be a placid, lovely thing.

But men like Chilton did not pay Will to be witty and sharp. They paid him to be an accessory, paid him for pleasure.

Will hung back behind Chilton, letting the man ramble away at Alana and Hannibal, his eyes pointedly trailing all over the room except to the scene unfolding in front of him. Hannibal did not take his eyes off of Will.

"Will, get me another martini would you?" Chilton drawled, flippantly tossing his credit card at Will behind him. "Get yourself whatever you want."

Will smiled, sensuous and accommodating as ever towards his client. "Of course. Thank you, Doctor Chilton."

Hannibal gritted his teeth at Will's low, smooth tone of voice, silken and dripping with suggestion. He really did play his part well; Hannibal had to give him that, at least.

Hannibal watched Will flag down the bartender within seconds, the young girl working there fluttering her eyelashes at Will and smiling too brightly the minute he caught her attention. It seemed everyone was ogling Will Graham tonight, Hannibal noticed, even Alana Bloom blushing and stealing glances at him. Everyone except for the man who had paid for his company that evening; Frederick really did not seem to be aware of how lucky he was

tonight. Ungrateful… it made Hannibal's blood boil, the jealous, possessive monster in his bones vibrate.

"Well, it was lovely to catch up with you, Frederick," Hannibal interjected quietly, tearing his eyes away from Will. "I'm sure we'll bump into you again this evening."

"We should sit together," Frederick beamed, eye lighting up. "Come, I insist. I've already got a table right over there."

Alana wearily followed the direction of Frederick's pointed finger, eyes falling on the table. She glanced up at Hannibal, her gaze seeming to say *Well?*

Hannibal sighed internally, weighing up his options. Make up some sort of excuse to leave Will and Chilton to it and have nothing to do with them again for the rest of the evening, or accept Frederick's offer and spend his night trying not to stare holes into the side of Will's face.

He chose the latter. For some reason, Will Graham decimated his common sense.

Having Hannibal sat across from him was unbearable. Will thought he might grind his teeth to powder before the end of the night, the clenching and unclenching of his jaw the only thing he could do to keep himself in control.

He was furious with Hannibal. It was as if Hannibal was mocking him, ridiculing him by choosing to sit with him and Chilton at this table all evening. The mere proximity to the man was making Will's skin crawl, the urge to turn his head and snap at Hannibal overwhelming; the urge to *demand* why Hannibal was doing this to him. Will felt like an insect burning his way to a slow death beneath the focus of a magnifying glass. Except the unbearable pin-point of heat was Hannibal's gaze.

He hadn't looked at Hannibal once since they'd all settled at the table, no matter how hard the doctor's gaze bore into his skull. As if Hannibal was trying to pry away layers of tissue and bone and climb inside of Will's head. Will fought against his gaze the only way he knew how; he threw himself into his job for the evening.

Hannibal admitted to himself that he did feel remorseful for the awkward predicament he and he alone had put Will in - the younger man's refusal to look at him even once was enough to tell Hannibal he had gravely upset Will. Pushed him away, he supposed, which was the exact opposite of what he had wanted. He'd simply wanted to be closer to Will.

Will was fighting back against Hannibal's games and mind tricks by playing the doting, sultry companion Frederick had paid him to be, and when Frederick was unaware of it or excused himself to the bar or the bathroom, Will threw that heady, sweet attention on Alana. Alana, who lapped it up, blushing and smiling and laughing under Will's administration. She asked little about him and his story, who he was, a trick Hannibal noticed Will played very well. Too well; Alana was curious and kind to everyone, but Will's silver tongue and charm had her gushing about herself in a way Hannibal had never seen before. The escort truly was gifted at his job, at making whoever was on the receiving end of his attention feel as if they

were truly, utterly interesting and important and that Will was fascinated by them. That Will existed only to gaze at them with a deep desire in his eyes, completely attuned to them and them only. Hannibal's blood was beginning to turn icy - he felt as though he'd been thrown out into the rain like an unwanted mongrel.

Such a strange thing, to feel like that. An entirely alien sensation that no one had ever caused in him before. Hannibal found himself desperate to know what else Will Graham could make him feel. Perhaps a whole spectrum of new feelings, wants and needs lay locked within Will's possession.

Hannibal had to find out. Had to have more of Will, just to himself, so he could bathe in the delightful new sparks of *feeling* the younger man seemed to have awoken in him. Hannibal made his mind up then and there. He would shatter his pride on the rocks beneath Will Graham's feet, dash his self-perceived dignity to pieces just for a few hours of Will's time. An evening of Will Graham, bought with his wealth. There was no other way, Will had made that clear. And so, Hannibal was going to do something he thought he would never stoop so low to do; he was going to pay for another's company, their pleasure. Whether it made him just as bad as Chilton, Hannibal found himself not caring. If it was the only way to see Will in the way he truly wanted, then it was what he would do.

"God, your *mouth* ," Frederick groaned, fingers sliding through Will's curls, holding his head still and flush against his groin.

Will hummed around the cock in his mouth, looking up slowly to meet Frederick's gaze. Frederick's eyes glinted, something sadistic lighting up within them, and Will knew he was wondering how long he could keep Will held here, his cock down Will's throat. Chilton sat on the edge of the bed, suit pants unzipped and jacket discarded. Will was stripped down to nothing but his boxers, kneeling on the floor between Chilton's legs.

Will rubbed his tongue on the underside of Chilton's heavy, pulsing cock, daring him to do exactly that.

Chilton caressed Will's cheek, almost tenderly, before grinning. "You could stay down there all night, couldn't you?"

Will simply sucked *hard* .

Frederick almost yelped, toes curling at the sensation. "Wicked thing."

He relinquished his hold on Will's hair, letting the younger man work his mouth off of his cock, gasping for air as he withdrew and letting the string of saliva bubble from his lips to the tip of Chilton's cock, keeping them connected.

"Filthy boy," Chilton breathed heavily, lids heavy with lust. "What other filthy things can you do?"

Will held Chilton's cock in his hand, leaning forwards and skimming his lips up and down Chilton's shaft, slow and wet in an open mouthed kiss. He blinked up at the doctor, smiling

lightly. “Whatever you want me to do.”

Will should have seen the slap coming, but it knocked the breath from his lungs anyway. His head snapped to the side, blinking rapidly as he sucked his breath back in and bit down on his bottom lip as the sting from the slap began to bloom along his cheek. He kept his head turned to the side until Chilton softly pulled his chin back, forcing Will to look back at him.

Will exhaled through his nose, keeping his teeth on his bottom lip and blinking prettily at Chilton. The grip on his jaw tightened, sliding down to his throat and keeping his head locked in place. Will gasped at the impact from the second slap, his head only jerking slightly to the side due to Chilton’s grip on his throat keeping him still.

“Do you like that?” Frederick grinned wolfishly, holding Will’s gaze.

Will let his empathy flutter forwards, caressing the walls of Chilton’s mind. Let it sink its hooks into Chilton, anchor there. Will shuddered, lowering his gaze.

“Yes,” he breathed, “I do.”

Frederick released him, standing and stepping aside before gesturing to the bed. “Get on the bed. Take the rest of your clothes off.”

Will obeyed.

In the morning, Will took the wad of bills Chilton carelessly dashed towards him before the other man rolled back over in the bed, grunting a goodbye at Will as he left the hotel room.

Will tried his best not to look at his reflection in the mirrored wall of the elevator, knowing full well what he’d see if he looked. The folded money in his pocket that Chilton had tipped him felt like a sack of bricks.

“Please tell me you have some good make-up you can use to cover *that* up,” Elijah sighed heavily as Will sat down on the vast, cream leather sofa in Elijah’s living room.

Will shot him a dirty look. “I’ll do my best.”

Elijah shook his head in dismay. “You know you could have told him to keep his fucking hands to himself. To just fuck you without making you look like you went twelve rounds with a heavy weight.”

Will snorted. “That’s a bit dramatic. It’s just a bit of bruising.”

“Yeah, well you better hope your new client doesn’t mind a bit of ‘bruising’, because you’ve got a new booking tomorrow night.”

Will groaned. “Seriously? I only had a booking with Chilton two nights ago.”

Elijah shrugged. “You want me to pass it along to one of the other boys? It’s that Lecter guy you told me about.”

Will shot up. “He called?”

“The day after your booking with Chilton at the gala.”

“What a fucking prick,” Will muttered under his breath.

Elijah raised an eyebrow. “I thought you wanted this booking? You passed my card along to him after all.”

Will covered his face with his hands, wincing as he forgot about the state of his tender face and lowering them again. “I did. I do. I don’t know, I just… how long has he booked me for?”

“Twelve hours.”

“ *Twelve* ?!” Will spluttered in shock, eyes widening. “What does he *want* ?”

“You, at his house at 8 pm, tomorrow night,” Elijah told him sternly, crossing his arms over his chest.

Will raised an eyebrow.

“He paid extra for you to meet him at his home, and seeing as you were the one to pass my details along to him… I figured you wouldn’t mind,” Elijah admitted, somewhat sheepishly.

Home visits were reserved for very few clients, clients that had been regulars for years. Public spaces were safer, more convenient for both sides.

“How much extra did he pay exactly?” Will muttered, frowning.

“You’ll see when you get your payment from it,” Elijah responded, still seeming sheepish. “It was… a lot. I was reluctant to let him book you to come to his home but… hell, even I have my price.”

Will shot him a sour look. “I'd say you’ve sold me down the river, but selling me is literally your job.”

“You ring me the minute you feel like you’re not safe,” Elijah growled, the protective streak he harboured for his employees simmering to the surface.

Will grimaced. “It’ll be fine. But I will, if I need to.”

Twelve whole hours in Hannibal Lecter’s home. From 8pm to 8am. With a face that was swollen and bruised and a body that wasn’t much better. Will’s stomach churned.

“I’d better go and start icing my fucking face,” Will grunted as he left Elijah’s apartment, not waiting for the other man to bid him goodbye.

Twelve *hours* . Will’s knees trembled.

More Than Just A Leitmotif

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Special K

(Literally every chapter title is a lyric from Placebo at this point, in case you couldn't tell I'm obsessed.)

Hannibal’s stomach clenched at the sound of the doorbell chiming throughout the house, realising with a quiet horror that he was *nervous* . Will wasn’t even inside his house yet and already the other man was making him feel things Hannibal had only ever seen smeared across the faces of others.

Steeling himself, Hannibal forced himself to walk at a reasonable pace to the front door, answering it after he’d schooled a warm, inviting expression on his face. He almost recoiled at the sight before him.

“Before you say anything,” Will gritted out as a way of greeting, “I’m perfectly aware of how bad it looks. And no, it doesn’t hurt very much anymore.”

Hannibal simply stepped aside and let Will cross the threshold, shutting the door behind with a gentle click. He noticed how Will’s fingers curled at the sound of the door being locked as he continued forwards into the foyer of Hannibal’s home.

Will was dressed smartly, his dark pants and inky blue shirt hugging the lines and planes of his body, his coat already shed and hanging over one of his arms.

“Please,” Hannibal said softly, reaching for the coat.

Something akin to anger flickered in Will’s eyes, but he let Hannibal hang his coat up regardless, and followed the older man as he beckoned him towards the kitchen.

“Would you like a drink?” Hannibal asked, already pouring Will a large whiskey as Will hesitated in the doorway of the kitchen.

He watched the escort’s nostrils flare at the smell of cooking. Will accepted the whiskey outstretched to him, glancing around.

“Nice place,” Will murmured, immediately sipping his drink.

“Thank you,” Hannibal offered to him in exchange, watching him carefully.

Will skimmed a fingertip over the kitchen counter that stood between them. “If you were trying *not* to seem like a control freak, the way this house has been organised within an inch of its life really isn’t helping.”

Hannibal’s lips twitched into a smirk, delighted at Will’s barbs and sharp tongue. “Is this how you start your bookings with all your clients? Compliments paired with bitter observations?”

“No,” Will murmured. “No, it’s not usually how it goes.”

Hannibal swallowed the wine he tipped into his own mouth. “I think we have a lot to discuss over dinner, don’t we?”

Will frowned. “I didn’t expect you to… to cook for me.”

Hannibal hummed in agreement. “No, I didn’t think you would. I suspect that you expect people to do very little for you. I hope to rectify that tonight.”

Hannibal could have sworn he saw a flush spread across Will’s bruised face - whether it was from embarrassment, desire or anger, Hannibal wasn’t sure. He was never sure with Will. The only thing he *was* sure about was the undeniable tension building between them, the tension that had sprung into existence the minute Hannibal’s eyes had met Will’s at that charity fundraiser auction a few weeks ago.

“Come, the dining room is just through there.”

Hannibal delighted in the way Will devoured his food, imagining the flavours stroking Will’s tongue and sliding down his throat.

“Where did you learn to cook like this?” Will demanded, marvelling at the slice of lamb he’d speared on his fork.

“I taught myself,” Hannibal answered. “My passion for food is something I’ve cultivated over the years.”

Will watched him with those dark eyes that Hannibal struggled to decipher, to fathom what the younger man was thinking. “That’s what you do, isn’t it? Cultivate. You’ve nurtured and grown everything that there is about you, everything you do. Cultivating this *image* you present of yourself, planting seeds in people’s heads, whether it's the patients you work with or the people you socialise with…”

Hannibal smiled, a ruthless thing that spread across his mouth. “You see far too much, don’t you, Will?”

Will stiffened. “I wish I didn’t, believe me.”

“Why?”

“Because it makes everything much more complicated than it needs to be. Throws you from side to side, tugs you in every direction until all you sense is other people. Your head gets

filled with things that don't belong to you."

"And what did Frederick Chilton fill your head with four nights ago?" Hannibal asked softly, setting his knife and fork down.

Will's relaxed hand on the table tightened into a fist. "You don't want to hear about Frederick."

"Oh, but I do," Hannibal insisted, face blank. "I want to hear about how and why the last time I saw you there wasn't a hair out of place on your head, and now you sit here tonight so badly beaten."

Will shrugged. "I can't account for the tastes of all my clients."

Hannibal's gaze narrowed. "You let him do this to you."

Will chewed, eyes fixed on his plate. Swallowed, then looked back up at Hannibal. "It's my job."

"Did you enjoy it?" Hannibal asked, his voice barely audible.

"I…," Will trailed off, frowning. "Why does it bother you so much, what he did?"

"Because I dislike the idea of him hurting you," Hannibal answered, voice cool and calm.

"Chilton's appetite was tame compared to some other clients I've had," Will dismissed him, eyes back on his meal, bringing his next mouthful to his lips.

Hannibal watched him chew, swallow.

Will finally set his cutlery down on his plate, finished with the food. He could tell Hannibal was bursting at the seams, dying to say something else. He admired the man's control to leave it, to simply pick up their finished plates and retreat into the kitchen.

Will's skin was tingling, crawling. He tried to remind himself that he knew how to handle himself. He just didn't exactly know how to handle Hannibal.

Lingering in the doorway of the kitchen as Hannibal finished loading his dishwasher, Will's gaze swept over him.

"Thank you for dinner," he said quietly. "It was fantastic."

"You're welcome, Will."

Will followed him silently as the doctor went to his living room - one of many , Will guessed - gesturing for Will to take a seat in one of the armchairs by the fire that was steadily blazing in the hearth, warmth radiating outwards and filling the room. Will already felt sleepy from his belly being so unusually full and the cosy warmth of the room.

He slid into the armchair, appreciating how comfortable it was, and wordlessly accepted the cognac Hannibal pressed into his hand before taking a seat in the opposite armchair.

“I’m sorry for prying into your business with Chilton,” Hannibal murmured, eyes on the flames before them. “I’m still having to remind myself of what you are. What you do.”

“How much of your pride did it wound to have to pay to have me here tonight?” Will retorted.

Hannibal scanned his face, noting the mess Chilton had made of him. A dark purple stained Will’s jaw and temple on one side, the other side sporting an arrangement of yellowing and blue underneath his eyes. His lip had been split, still healing. Hannibal noted the beginnings of finger marks bruised into Will’s throat beneath the collar of his button-down.

“A lot, until you arrived and I saw what he’d done to you.”

“I don’t want or need you to feel sorry for me, Hannibal,” Will warned him, voice low.

“Shall we talk of wants and needs again? About how I’ll get what I want tonight and you’ll get what you need?” Hannibal asked darkly, leaning forwards slightly in his chair.

Will savoured the cognac on his tongue. “Did you think you would be different? That I’d come here and be a different creature for you? No, Hannibal. The means that justify the end may be different but our roles remain the same. I’m here to give you what you want, because you paid for it.”

“And what do I want, Will?”

Will set his cognac glass down, a smirk pulling at his lips. “You want to feel like you didn’t pay for this. You want a version where we met as strangers and became entangled. A version where I’m here of my own free will. And I could act like that for you, if it’s what you wanted. But it’s not; you don’t want to be coddled, like some of my other clients do when they ask me to pretend like I’m anything other than what I am. You’re brave enough to face the reality of what this is.”

Hannibal tilted his head, watching Will and saying nothing, waiting for him to keep going. So Will did.

“I know you don’t want me to treat you like I do my other clients. You don’t want me to smile prettily at you, to simper after you, laugh at every unfunny thing you say. You don’t need or want anyone to stroke your ego like that. You like the retorts and verbal sparring, the back and forth with me, because nobody else would *dare* do it. You find me… refreshing.”

“Amongst other things,” Hannibal growled.

Will’s smirk widened. “You could have a pretty little bleating thing on your arm if you wanted; in fact you did, the other night. With Doctor Bloom. But you get bored, despite how pleasant it is to surround yourself with nice things. You like the mind games you can see I’m able to play; the fact I can dig around in your head just like you do to everyone else.”

“Does that make us opponents worthy of each other?” Hannibal mused, eyes fixated on Will’s lazy grin, the flames dancing in his eyes from the fire.

“Doctor Lecter,” Will scoffed. “Don’t you know by now that I’ll be whatever you pay me to be?”

Hannibal bristled.

Will laughed at his tense posture. “Do you think that night with Frederick was the first time someone laid their hands on me? Do you think *I’ve* never laid *my* hands on a client? I do whatever is desired of me, and they don’t even have to *ask* . That’s what makes me so good at this.”

“Digging around in heads,” Hannibal quoted Will from earlier. “It’s easy for you. You reach out and see what others want, even when they don’t know it themselves.”

“That night with Chilton,” Will began, leaning even closer from his chair towards Hannibal, “I could tell that was the first time he’d ever done that. Indulged in those desires. The first two times he struck me, he was testing the waters. Testing to see whether he could fully dive headfirst into what he’s been too scared to act upon. I didn’t *want* to be held down and choked, beaten whilst he fucked me. I put myself in his head until I did want it, so that I could endure it. And I’ve been walking around aching and sore since that night but it doesn’t matter.”

“And why doesn’t it matter?”

“Because it all balances out; he got what he wanted and I got what I needed. Everything I do, Hannibal, is about maintaining that equilibrium.”

“How tiring it must be, to live one’s life solely by transactions,” Hannibal quipped, lip curling.

Will merely welcomed the retort, shrugging. “I can’t afford to live any other way.”

“What do you mean by that?” Hannibal asked curiously, clawing on to the tiny bit of himself Will had revealed. “Surely you wanted a life other than this at some point.”

Will shrank back into the armchair, his face suddenly sullen. “Are you after an origin story, Doctor Lecter?”

“Why can’t you afford to live any other way than this?” Hannibal repeated.

“Why should I tell you?”

“Because you’re revelling in this as much as I am,” Hannibal smoothly replied. “You can’t remember the last time you sparred with someone like this, mentally. You thrive off of the back and forth as much as I do. Don’t be mistaken, Will; you’re only able to mentally undress me and carve out my desires because I *let* you see what’s inside.”

Will regarded him for a moment, silently. Then he spoke:

“I haven’t always been sharp. I was young and naïve and stupid - that’s how I fell into this. I made decisions that cost me everything I had, decisions that kept me trapped and in the hands of people who used me. How you see me now, Hannibal, is an image I’ve had to cultivate too. I managed to get out of the situation I was in, but again… there’s always a cost. And I’ll be paying for it for the foreseeable future.”

“Someone hurt you,” Hannibal murmured. “Hurt you in ways so entirely different from the way in which Chilton hurt you.”

The escort swallowed, eyes cast to the fire. “I get what I need. And what I need is to keep paying the cost of what I did, rectifying my mistakes.”

“Where does the money go, Will?”

Will scoffed softly. “That’s a story for another time.”

Hannibal watched him rise to his feet, stepping closer to his arm chair in front of the fire. Will’s hand drifted forwards, gently removing the emptied cognac glass from Hannibal’s hand and setting it on the mantelpiece above the fire. He turned back to Hannibal, his eyes glimmering with something Hannibal couldn’t quite read.

“Stand up,” Will breathed, lingering in front of the fire, almost seeming unsure of himself.

Hannibal did as he was told, rising to his feet from the chair and taking a step towards Will. Will reached across the space between them, his thumb caressing Hannibal’s cheekbones. Hannibal almost keened at the simple touch.

“Upstairs…which is your bedroom?” Will asked so softly, so quietly, that Hannibal nearly didn’t hear him.

“What makes you think I want you in my bed?” Hannibal countered, just to see how Will would respond. “What if I want you down here, playing more mind games with me? Jabbing and sparring at each other til one of us wins?”

Will’s lips curled into a delicious smile, the bruises on his face contorting with the movement. “What you want is for me to want something for once. You want me to act on my desires, not what I need. So I am. Now tell me, Doctor Lecter - which room is your bedroom?”

Will watched in triumph as Hannibal’s pupils dilated.

“Upstairs, at the very end of the hall on the right.”

“You’re going to wait here,” Will instructed him gently, thumb skimming over his cheekbone again. “And then in five minutes you’re going to come upstairs to your bedroom. Both of us will get what we want.”

It was Hannibal’s turn to swallow this time, his head a swirling mess of all the things Will had admitted to him, the stones Will had upturned in Hannibal’s own mind, the titbits of the

truth that Will had fed him about his story, his past. It all boiled down to this moment; of Will perhaps, for once, *finally* getting what he wanted and what he needed all in one go.

Hannibal almost flinched as he noticed Will had backed away to the door without him realising, lost in his thoughts.

“Five minutes, Hannibal,” Will reminded him.

Then he was gone, vanishing towards the stairs. Hannibal sank back into the arm chair and waited, eyes glued to the clock on the mantelpiece.

Drunk On Immorality

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Commercial for Levi

Those five minutes were the longest of Will's life. When Hannibal finally opened the door to the bedroom and hovered in the doorway, as if he was somehow hesitant to enter his own bedroom and unsure of where to put himself, Will's heart was nearly ready to burst through his chest.

Will surveyed Hannibal's hesitation. "Changed your mind?"

Hannibal shut the door behind him, his eyes simmering in the low, orange light cast from the lamps around the room. He watched Will stretched across his bed, fingers digging into the cotton sheets and the flush of heat spread across his battered face. His feet were bare, his belt missing from the loopholes of his trousers and his shirt was untucked and unbuttoned.

He was glorious. Battered and bruised and covered in mottled marks, but glorious. Hannibal drank in the sight of the strip of skin revealed by his unbuttoned shirt, wanting to lavish his tongue against the marble torso he bore, stained with yellowing and purple splotches. He tilted his head to meet Hannibal's stare, face unreadable and unmoving.

"No," Hannibal relented softly. "I haven't changed my mind."

He crossed the room slowly, stopping when he was inches away from the bed. Will's hand lifted, trailing his fingers over the belt buckle at Hannibal's front. Hannibal's blood was thrumming, his cock swelling at the gentlest of touches from Will. Will admired how he slowly came undone, the light in his eyes burning darker in the dimmed bedroom. A few strands of his hair had slipped free from their immaculately swept style, brushing forwards onto Hannibal's forehead as if he'd been running his hands through his hair whilst he waited to come to his bedroom.

"What do you want, Hannibal?" Will asked, fingers curling around his belt buckle tighter.

Hannibal cocked an eyebrow. "Isn't that what that clever mind of yours does? Work out what people want?"

Will shuddered. "Maybe I want to switch off for once."

Hannibal's fingers caught Will's chin, as so many clients had before, angling his head to look into his eyes. Except this time, Will relished the feel of the hold on his chin.

“I need to know what your boundaries are,” Hannibal hummed, his free hand sliding into Will’s curls slowly. “And before you say something about how you don’t get paid to have boundaries, Will, I want your honesty more than I want to chase my own pleasure.”

Will’s eyes darkened, but he blinked as if the question stunted him. Hannibal summarised that nobody had bothered to ask him before, only ever seeing Will as an object to use and be used by.

Will’s cheeks flushed, scarlet burning across his bruised, angelic face. “On a practical note, we need to wear protection. Elijah makes us get tested regularly and I’m clean but you can’t fuck me without a condom.”

Will knew full well that Hannibal had been subjected to an STI test by Elijah before their meeting, as was the procedure if you wanted to hire an escort from Elijah. Part of the cost of hiring an escort from Elijah included the discreet, same-day results test that all clients had to take.

“Of course,” Hannibal murmured. “What else?”

“I’ll tell you if there’s something I don’t like,” Will eventually replied, leaning into Hannibal’s touch. “I just want… kiss me?”

Such a sweet, simple request. Hannibal huffed a soft laugh at Will’s begrudging vulnerability, leaning down to press him down to the bed first. Will’s breath caught in his throat as Hannibal moved to hover over him, knocking his legs apart with his knees and bracketing his hands on either side of Will’s head. Their faces were inches apart, and Will was overwhelmingly aware of the sheer mass of the doctor, his presence staggering. He wanted the full weight of the older man pressing him into the bed.

“I only want two things from you, Will,” Hannibal admitted, nose skimming along Will’s jaw.

“What is it?” Will nearly panted.

“I don’t want you to act,” Hannibal replied, lips brushing over Will’s pulse point now. “I don’t want whatever performance you give to everyone else; I want the pure, unadulterated Will.”

“What’s the second thing?”

“I want you to enjoy this. I want you to want this as much as I do.”

Will gripped one hand on the back of Hannibal’s neck and the other around his tapered waist, holding Hannibal’s gaze. “I already am enjoying it.”

Hannibal relished the force with which Will pressed their lips together, his legs already eagerly wrapping around Hannibal’s hips and pulling down, pressing their groins together. Will kissed him hungrily, opening his mouth for Hannibal as the doctor slowly slid his tongue

over Will's bottom lip. Will moved his hand up from the back of Hannibal's neck to grip his golden-silver hair, stroking through the soft strands on Hannibal's head.

Hannibal took his time unravelling Will; sliding a palm over that bare strip of skin exposed from his unbuttoned shirt, tasting the cognac on Will's tongue, rocking his hips gently against the insistent push from Will's groin. Will's skin felt flushed and overheated after mere minutes of Hannibal simply kissing him, their lips and tongues tangled together and Hannibal's palm skimming over the bare parts of Will.

Hannibal pulled back, allowing Will to make short work of his belt as he unbuttoned his own shirt, tossing it behind him. Will bit his lip at the older man's musculature, the bulge of biceps and deltoids, the layer of greying chest hair dusted over his pectoral muscles and the ridges of abdominals that bore a hint of soft stomach at the bottom. Will's mouth watered at the sight of him, at how very *male* Hannibal was. Will just thanked the universe that he wouldn't have to wait long to see how the tendons in Hannibal's corded arms would ripple as he held Will down, how the clench of muscles around his waist and hips would feel as he thrust -

"Getting distracted, Will?"

Will finished his task of unzipping Hannibal's trousers, his mouth suddenly turning dry. "Just admiring."

"Is that a compliment from the sharp tongued Will Graham?" Hannibal smirked, his own eyes raking down Will's form.

"You asked me to be honest."

"I did."

"Take your pants off, Hannibal. Take everything off," Will commanded him, a fierce glint appearing in his eyes.

Hannibal was quick to obey Will's request, stripping himself until he was crouched over Will again, pinning Will's hands against the bed beneath them above his head, and claiming Will's mouth once more. Will moaned, struggling to break free from Hannibal's grip to get a proper look at the older man utterly naked, his entire physique.

Hannibal chuckled at his squirming and released him, only to shed Will of the remainder of his own clothes. Will's shirt tore as Hannibal ripped it away from him, causing the escort to gasp into Hannibal's mouth.

"Hannibal - "

"I'll buy you a new one," Hannibal hushed him against Will's throat, teeth grazing his Adam's apple. "I'll buy you as many more as you want."

Will whimpered, unsure as to why Hannibal's half snarled offer of *buying* him things made his stomach flutter. He had clients claim they wanted to buy him ridiculous things all the time, had countless gifts delivered to Elijah to pass on to him, sometimes had bookings where

his client's sole desire was to take him shopping and lavish him with gifts. Will kept a few gifts to maintain an air of *looking* expensive for other clients so he'd fit in at functions and galas and dinners, but most he pawned and sold. Any spare cash he could put towards rent or paying off the debt he owed Crawford.

Hannibal yanked Will's feet through the ends of his trousers, sinking low to Will's bruised navel and *peeling* his underwear from him with his teeth.

"That first night you saw me," Will panted, holding himself up on his elbows as he watched Hannibal tug his underwear down. "At the charity fundraiser."

Hannibal paused, eyes glued to where Will's hardened cock had sprung free and slapped against his flat, toned stomach, groaning at the sight. "Yes?"

"You outbid my client on that necklace just because you could, didn't you?" Will whispered, chest heaving as Hannibal's fingers slid around his thighs. "He wanted to have that necklace. Wanted to buy it so I could wear it whilst he fucked me later that night."

Hannibal paused, sitting up between Will's legs, eyes fixed on Will's. "I still have it. Do you want it?"

Will laughed humourlessly. "No, God no. I just… you'll get me a new shirt though, right?"

Hannibal's smile was dark, predatory. "Will… I'll get you anything your heart desires."

Will bit his lip to stop himself from whimpering again at Hannibal's answer, squeezing his thighs together. Hannibal noticed, drinking in the sight of the man beneath him. He was tensed, skin flushed and bruised, but chiselled from silken marble, each breath stretching that deliciously pale skin over his rib cage, his pulse fluttering in his neck. Will's cock was straining against his stomach, red and weeping and *needy* .

Will surveyed Hannibal right back, savouring the sight of Hannibal's thick, hard cock, uncut and bearing a pearl of precum at the tip. Will didn't stop himself from darting forwards, knocking Hannibal back and licking that drop of precum away with a kitten lick.

Hannibal shuddered, hands flying to grasp Will's curls as the escort's tongue continued to swirl against the tip of his cock. "Is that something you like, darling? Gifts? Being spoiled by someone?"

Will pressed his head against the soft layer of Hannibal's stomach, panting. "No. I don't… not usually, but I…"

Hannibal dragged him up to face him, the pair of them kneeling in front of each other now. "Is that something you want from me?"

Will's face twisted. "Maybe. Right now though, I just want your mouth on me."

"Something to discuss later, then," Hannibal mused.

Will didn't have time to think before he was pinned back down on the bed, Hannibal's hot mouth trailing kisses over his ribs and then down the centre of his abdomen. Will jerked at the feeling Hannibal's mouth sucking on the bruise just to the side of Will's belly button, teeth scraping over the injury.

Will hissed, the strange pain-pleasure tunnelling itself into his core as Hannibal pressed his thumb down into the purpling splotch of a bruise over Will's left hip bone. Will writhed at the pressure.

"Sore?" Hannibal whispered against his skin, beginning to slick with sweat.

Will bit his lip, nodding.

"Poor thing," Hannibal almost cooed, lips skimming even lower towards exactly where Will wanted them.

"Hannibal," Will gritted out, fingers threading through Hannibal's hair.

"Don't worry, sweet thing," Hannibal purred, eyes glinting in the low lights. "I'll take care of you."

Will didn't have words to describe the relief he felt as Hannibal's mouth finally sank down over his straining, weeping member. Hannibal groaned at the sensation of Will's cock, pulsing and hot on his mouth as he swirled his tongue and sucked.

" *Oh,* " Will gasped breathlessly, back slightly arching off of the bed and hips canting upwards a tad before he checked himself, biting his lip and lowering his hips.

Hannibal pulled away with a snarl, vicious thumbs digging back into the bruises on Will's hips, his abdomen. Will's breath stuttered and he squirmed at the feeling of the soreness flaring through him again so unexpectedly.

"What did I say, Will? I don't want you to act or pretend," Hannibal scolded him from between his legs. "If you want to fuck my mouth, *do it*."

Will let out a strangled noise at the curse that came from Hannibal's eloquent, sophisticated mouth, the mouth which had sunk back down onto Will's cock before Will even had time to realise the implications of what Hannibal had said.

Will bucked his hips up, a shiver running through him as Hannibal took the chance to slide his hands underneath Will's ass, squeezing the flesh that pressed into his fingers as Will's hips lowered again. Will swore as Hannibal's strong, warm hands squeezed his ass again and pushed him upwards, encouraging him to thrust his hips up as much as he wanted into Hannibal's mouth.

So he did - he thrust up, bucking and canting his hips as his cock pulsed in Hannibal's mouth, hit the back of his throat. Hannibal didn't gag once; he simply moaned as Will found a shallow, needy rhythm of stuttering thrusts in Hannibal's mouth. He lavished his tongue along Will's cock relentlessly, savouring the clench of the muscles in Will's ass in his hands.

Hannibal was more than happy to lay sprawled here all night and let Will fuck his mouth, use him, but he couldn't resist slipping a long, dexterous index finger along the cleft of Will's ass. Will shivered at the touch, Hannibal finding that small dip between his cheeks and circling Will's entrance with a dry finger.

Will could feel his release tightening in his stomach, his blood pumping manically in his ears. Will choked as he felt Hannibal's spit slide down from his cock and between his cheeks, Hannibal's clever, long fingers raking that spit towards his hole and *pressing* gently. Will swore he felt tears forming in his eyes as Hannibal hollowed his cheeks and sucked, his finger continuing to stroke, slow, lazy circles over his fluttering hole.

Will convulsed suddenly beneath Hannibal, and then he was coming, spurting thick ropes of his release down Hannibal's throat with a hoarse cry, head thrown back against the twisted sheets and pillows beneath them. Hannibal didn't give him time to recover before he snatched Will by the hips, digging his thumbs into those sore, delicate bruises and flipping Will roughly onto his belly.

Will gasped as the bedsheets rutted up against his over-sensitive cock, shuddering as Hannibal kept his hips grasped firmly between his palms.

"Beautiful, Will," Hannibal said breathlessly, throat a little sore and voice a little hoarse after being used so deliciously by Will.

Will had no reply as Hannibal buried his face between Will's cheeks, fingers gripping his hips up to hold his rear aloft from the bed so Hannibal could eat him out.

" *Hannibal* ," Will hissed, eyes rolling in his head as he felt pleasure spark along his spine again.

Hannibal's tongue was flat and sweeping against Will's hole, licking right up the centre of him from his balls to his tailbone.

"Jesus Christ," Will muttered into the bedsheets, shifting so his knees were beneath him and Hannibal had better access.

"Good boy," Hannibal whispered over his hole, spreading Will's cheeks wide with his hands and spitting against his hole, unexpectedly filthy and incredible.

Will felt himself harden again, whimpering. *Good boy* . It was something he heard all the time from clients, just like the gift giving. So why did it sound so fucking good, so toe-curlingly perfect, from Hannibal's mouth?

Hannibal's tongue was circling his hole, sucking against it and lathering his tongue flat in a repeated dance and rhythm. Will moaned when Hannibal's hand slid forwards to feel Will hard and erect again, weeping into the bed.

"Will," Hannibal murmured in reverence, awe laced in his voice. "Does that feel good, darling?"

Will squirmed at the purring *darling* that fell from Hannibal's lips. "Y-yeah… yeah, it's good. Please don't stop."

Hannibal's tongue pierced Will's hole and he mewled into the fisted sheets before him. Hannibal's mouth was enclosed around Will's entrance now, tongue working inside of him, jaw moving in slow, steady motions as he ate Will out as if he was feasting on dessert.

It was too much; Will wanted it to last for hours, to last all night, but the frantic need to have Hannibal's cock inside of him was too much. And if Will wanted that soon, he'd better damn well tell the older man, because if the sex so far was anything to go by, he'd no doubt spend an age tormenting Will with opening him up and getting him stretched.

Hannibal could feel Will growing restless, smirking as he curled his tongue inside of Will. He knew what the escort wanted. What he needed.

Hannibal gently pulled away from Will, panting. Will slumped forwards into the bed, also breathless. Will watched from where he'd collapsed as Hannibal shifted to sit against the headboard, long, tanned legs spread out in front of him. He stretched over and retrieved a bottle of lube from the bedside table along with a condom. Will's eyes tracked his every movement.

"Come here," Hannibal near purred, eyes blazing with want.

Will shuffled forwards, appearing almost nervous, until Hannibal's hand latched around his wrist and twisted him around so that Will sat between Hannibal's spread legs, his back to Hannibal's broad, warm chest. Will groaned in realisation of what Hannibal was doing when the older man lifted Will's legs, one hand underneath each of Will's knees and tilting him backwards slightly so that Will was somewhat curled in on himself, his fluttering, spit soaked hole exposed.

"There we are," Hannibal rumbled from behind him, the vibrations from his chest pushing against Will's back.

Will threw his head back on one of Hannibal's shoulders for a moment, chest heaving and head spinning.

Hannibal let him watch as he poured lube over two of his fingers, dropping his hand to Will's core. Will bit his lip as those two slick fingers circled his hole, carefully pushing in. Will watched them begin to vanish inside of him.

The stretch was enough to make Will twitch, squirming in Hannibal's embrace. Hannibal's free hand grazed down to Will's cock, fingertips brushing over his length.

"Such a lovely cock, Will," Hannibal praised him, his lips ghosting over the shell of Will's ear.

Before Will could respond, Hannibal pushed his fingers deeper and scissored them, delighting in the startled moan that ripped from Will's throat. The escort arched into his touch, the sweet burn and stretch of Hannibal's fingers overwhelming.

And then when he crooked his fingers just so -

“ *Nngh* - Fucking… oh *fuck,* Hannibal,” Will yelped, convulsing as Hannibal caressed his prostate.

“There?” Hannibal chuckled breathlessly against Will’s ear again, the sensitive shell of his ear making him squirm even more.

Will choked on a moan as Hannibal’s broad hand wrapped tightly around Will’s cock and began stroking him firmly. His fingers continued to twist and stretch Will open, his ass a mess of lube and spit as Hannibal luxuriated in taking him apart with careful, precise touches.

Another teasing stroke of his prostate and the glide of a hand along his cock, and Will was shuddering as a second orgasm built within him. Hannibal grinned, something feral delighting in his chest at Will’s toes curling, his pulse hammering, writhing in his arms. There was no acting, no faked moans or sighs as Hannibal pleasured him. Just Will, receiving what Hannibal wished to give him again and again and again.

“Hannibal, I’m going to come again if you keep doing that,” Will groaned, sweat pooling on his upper lip at the too-good, too-much, too-sweet feeling of Hannibal working his cock and massaging his prostate in tandem.

A third finger crept alongside the two already inside of him, pressing in deftly. Will clenched around Hannibal’s fingers and trembled.

“Keep doing what, Will?” Hannibal asked innocently, fingers mercilessly rubbing over Will’s sweet spot without pause. Will’s cock twitched in his hand.

“You know exactly what,” Will hissed, trying to shy away from the touches of both of Hannibal’s hands and failing miserably.

“Don’t you want to come?” Hannibal rumbled, tongue sliding down the arch of Will’s pale neck.

He stopped at where Chilton’s fingerprints had bruised into Will’s flesh and latched his teeth onto the skin, sucking and kissing there to leave his own mark. Will sobbed helplessly.

“I want you inside of me,” Will begged, chest heaving. “I want to come on your cock, not your fingers.”

Hannibal groaned at Will’s honesty, relinquishing his hold on the escort and slipping his fingers free from his ass. Will nearly collapsed, but Hannibal held him upright, thumbing over Will’s peaked, sensitive nipples as he clasped him to his chest. Will writhed against the touch.

“So sensitive,” Hannibal marvelled, laying Will down and shifting to hover over him. “Is it always like this?”

“No,” Will nearly wailed, eyes scrunched up and shuddering as Hannibal caught one of his nipples in his mouth, sucking hard. “Please, Hannibal.”

“It’s alright, darling,” Hannibal soothed him, already ripping open the condom packet and reaching for the lube. “I’ll give you what you want now.”

Will merely whimpered, astounded at how the older man had completely unravelled him. He couldn’t remember the last time anyone had made him feel like this; the last time anyone had *bothered* to make him feel even remotely close to this.

Will barely registered Hannibal rolling the condom on to his straining, red cock, the sounds of the lube being slicked over his member hardly floating to his ears. Will felt like his bones were jelly already, and yet he was desperate to come again. Desperate for Hannibal.

Hannibal smoothed a hand along Will’s bruised hip as he lined up, stroking the head of his cock along Will’s perineum and entrance. Will lifted his legs, spreading them wider and holding himself open as Hannibal held his cock at Will’s hole, hips ever so gently beginning to thrust forwards. Will felt the gentle intrusion, felt his stretched hole relaxing around Hannibal as he entered him at a maddeningly slow pace.

“More,” Will demanded, eyes wide and teeth nearly bared in a snarl.

“I’ll give it to you, I promise,” Hannibal hushed him, one hand clasped around the junction of Will’s neck and shoulder, the other clutching Will’s waist. “Just be patient.”

Will felt exquisite; still tight despite being worked open with his fingers, eaten out lavishly by his tongue. He was so warm and slick, the clench of his walls around Hannibal’s cock as he entered him divine. Hannibal withdrew his hips just a tiny bit before gently pushing back in a little further; pulled back out ever so slowly and then tilted his hips forwards again. Will nearly sobbed as Hannibal slowly worked him open, easing him inch by inch into taking his full length. It was driving Will insane, but some part of him relished the feeling, wanted Hannibal to spend hours gently fucking him open.

Will continued to hold his legs up and open, clutching underneath his knees. Their eyes met and Hannibal slid in to the hilt, finally pushing his full length inside of Will. They both groaned in unison, Will grinding down against where Hannibal’s hips were flush against his ass.

Then Hannibal began to move.

Gone were the careful, tentative thrusts that had worked him open, replaced now by brutal, heavy pounding that felt like it might split Will in half. He found himself wanting it, craving it, the thought of Hannibal splitting him in two.

Hannibal drank down the soft, startled whimpers and gasps of ‘ *oh* ’ that spilled from Will’s lips each time Hannibal drove his cock back inside of Will, pulling all the way out nearly before slamming home again. Will was enthralled with the sensation, writhing and moaning shamelessly beneath the older man.

“That’s it,” Hannibal uttered, “this is what you needed, wasn’t it darling?”

“ *Yes* ,” Will whined, eyes fixated on where he could see Hannibal’s cock pumping in and out of him at that rough, ferocious pace Will hadn’t realised he wanted so badly. It was perfect.

Hannibal snarled, pressing his weight into Will even further, penetrating him even deeper somehow. Will was clenching around him unconsciously, milking his cock as he fucked him.

“I wanted this from the moment you walked away from me at the opera house,” Hannibal rumbled, setting a punishing pace that sent Will’s head reeling. “Wanted to see you come undone like this.”

“So good,” Will whispered, his breath trembling. “Feels so good, Hannibal, don’t stop.”

Hannibal bent over him, teeth latching on to the bruises left from Chilton’s fingers once more in a show of possessiveness. Will’s gut twisted at the action, not wanting to fully address how much of a thrill shot through him at the realisation that Hannibal had been jealous. He should've known the doctor was jealous the minute he started fucking Will like an animal in rut. But then Hannibal pulled out, and Will could have sobbed at the loss of that, thick, heavy cock pounding into him.

Hannibal laid back, dragging Will upright over the top of him. He fisted his cock with one hand, gripping Will’s hip with the other.

“Ride it,” Hannibal snarled softly, “show me how you like it.”

Will’s stomach felt like it had done a backflip. He wasted no time in mounting himself on Hannibal’s cock, sighing and hissing at the stretch as he sank down. A smothered sound died in Hannibal’s throat at the sight of Will impaling himself on his cock, head tipped back in ecstasy.

“That’s it, there’s a good boy,” Hannibal panted heavily, swallowing thickly.

Will moaned. “Say it again.”

“Say what again, darling?”

Will ground his hips down, rocking Hannibal’s cock against his prostate and keening. “Tell me I’m a good boy.”

Lust flared even brighter in Hannibal’s eyes, a sly grin spreading across his face. “Is that what you like, Will? Like being a good boy for me?”

Will’s fingers slid to Hannibal’s throat in response for leverage, beginning to ride Hannibal in earnest.

“Look at you,” Hannibal breathed in amazement. “Taking my cock so well, aren’t you?”

“Want to be good for you,” Will exhaled heavily, all of his shame long forgotten as he took what he wanted from Hannibal. “Want to make you feel good too.”

“Oh, you are,” Hannibal gritted out, the sweet slide of Will’s walls around his cock near unbearable. “You are, Will. You’re doing so well.”

Will sobbed as Hannibal latched a hand around his member where it bumped against his stomach whilst he rode the doctor, thighs beginning to burn. Hannibal set a brutal pace, his feet planted flat on the bed and his hand gripping Will so tightly, his intent clear; he wanted Will to get off again, to come whilst he writhed and contorted atop of Hannibal. Will flinched at the hand that was working him so thoroughly, gasping for air. His balls tightened, the warmth spreading low in his belly.

“Hannibal,” he warned, beginning to feel himself teeter towards the edge for a second time tonight.

“I’ve got you,” Hannibal murmured in encouragement. “Keep going Will, that’s it.”

The sweet, humming words from Hannibal’s mouth in combination with the rough way he fisted Will’s cock and slammed his hips up to meet Will’s downward thrusts were enough to make Will see stars.

“ *Oh* , Will, yes, yes, just like that sweetheart,” Hannibal was groaning beneath him.

Will’s body convulsed, shaking, his mouth open in a silent shout as he came. Hannibal stroked him throughout, murmuring soft words of awe and praise, how beautiful he was, how lovely he was. Will could barely hear him, the white hot heat searing through him, his ass clenching around Hannibal and his cock spurting in the doctor’s hand.

He sagged forwards, wrecked and whimpering after his orgasm slowly died, blazing embers fading within him. Hannibal clutched him, one arm around his waist, the other around the back of his neck.

“Ssh, ssh,” Hannibal soothed him. “Such a good boy, Will. Just a little bit more for me now.”

Will nearly bawled into Hannibal’s chest as the older man picked up the pace of his hips again, holding Will to his body in an iron grip. Will couldn’t move, wiped out by his orgasm, but he struggled pathetically as his abused asshole was fucked again, Hannibal thrusting up with fervour into Will’s body to chase his own orgasm. Will found himself sinking into it, relishing in the slick slide, in and out. He pressed sloppy, open mouth kisses to Hannibal’s collar bones, the hollow of his throat.

A few more wild thrusts, and Hannibal was snarling with his release into Will’s neck, huffing and groaning as his cock twitched deliciously inside of Will, filling the condom. Will longed to feel that cock filling him instead, coating his insides after being fucked raw.

But rules were rules, even if they’d just fucked like lovers, like inamoratos connected mind, body and soul. Will didn’t want to examine what that meant right now, what they’d just done.

But the words came tumbling out anyway.

“I never… Nobody has ever…” Will gasped quietly, softly against Hannibal’s skin. “*Hannibal* .”

“It’s alright,” Hannibal soothed him, running a hand down his sweaty back. “Don’t go inside now, Will. Stay with me. It’s alright.”

Will clutched Hannibal tighter, not caring about the sticky mess between them.

What the hell had just happened?

Both Spineless And Sublime

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Teenage Angst

Will slept like the dead; he vaguely remembered Hannibal tenderly wiping away the spit, lube and cum splattered over his skin, kissing him as he went. Will had sunk into a deep sleep draped over Hannibal's chest, unable to keep his eyes open any longer. Hannibal's fingers had carded through his curls, and then Will had slipped into unconsciousness.

Hannibal was already awake when Will stirred in the morning, the sounds of the other man in the attached bathroom indicating Hannibal's whereabouts. Will grunted as he sat up right, wiping his bleary eyes and squinting at the clock; 7:30 am. Only thirty minutes left until Hannibal's paid time with him ended. Will cursed under his breath, his ass throbbing as he crawled out of Hannibal's vast, stupidly comfortable bed. Hannibal caught him as he was in the process of tugging his underwear back up, discarded on the floor.

Hannibal lent against the doorframe to the ensuite, freshly showered and skin flushed from the steam. Will's mouth watered at the sight of him standing there, towel slung low on his hips and the smell of his no-doubt expensive shower gels and oils wafting forwards from the steam escaping from the bathroom.

"Good morning," Hannibal greeted him, voice husky from its first use of the day. "How did you sleep?"

Will finished tugging his boxers back up over his hips, tearing his eyes away from Hannibal. "Great, thanks."

The silence between them grew heavy.

"I made breakfast, if you want any," Hannibal proffered.

Will grabbed his trousers, his discarded socks and belt, saying nothing. The clock by Hannibal's bed read 7:35.

"I'm not much of a breakfast person," Will muttered, searching for his shirt but then remembering what had happened to it.

Hannibal seemed to read his mind, noting the blush that spread across Will's face. He went to his closet, retrieving a thick, soft sweatshirt for Will. Will blinked in surprise, barely being able to imagine Hannibal owning anything other than those ridiculous suits he wore. Hannibal held the sweatshirt out to him, the colour a deep crimson. Will hoped the tremble in his hands wasn't too noticeable as he took it and slid it over his head.

It was too large for him, but the warmth, the softness of it, the smell of *Hannibal* laced into the threads of the thing made Will's toes curl.

"Come and sit with me," Hannibal instructed him softly, already halfway out of the door.

Will blinked, realising he hadn't even noticed Hannibal had slung on a robe and loose pyjama bottoms whilst he'd been standing there marvelling at the feel of the sweatshirt on his skin. Will followed in silence to the kitchen. He slunk into one of the seats at the counter, watching as Hannibal dished up what looked like a simple combination of egg and sausage.

Coffee was slid towards him gently over the countertop.

"Are you sure you don't want breakfast?" Hannibal asked again, a fork poised over his own plate.

"Coffee is fine, thanks," Will replied flatly.

His head was a mess. Last night…

He watched the prongs of the fork disappear into Hannibal's mouth, beginning to feel strange.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Hannibal offered kindly, eyes searching for something in Will's face.

The coffee was hot, delicious and deep on Will's tongue. "I don't know what there is to say."

"Last night has clearly… rattled you."

Will flushed. "Listen, if you're looking for me to tell you how good last night was then I will. You've still got…" - Will checked his wrist watch - "fifteen minutes of our time together."

"I don't want you to tell me how good last night was. My ego is not quite so fragile as that. I know it was good, for both of us."

"Then what do you want?" Will nearly snapped, fingers tightening on his mug of coffee.

Will tried to ignore the fact that he was acting so rudely towards a client, that he would never *dare* speak to a client like this. But Hannibal wasn't like the rest of them. The money he'd paid to have Will here was a necessary evil, a barrier the doctor couldn't work around and had no choice but to yield to. And Will… Will didn't want to examine how he felt about the older man.

"I want you to tell me what you're thinking, what you're feeling," Hannibal replied softly, brushing aside Will's prickly tone of voice.

The escort was clearly deflecting. A wild animal backed into a corner, snarling and forced to face his feelings.

"Are you asking me that as my client?"

“And if I was?”

“Then I’d have to answer you honestly. It’s what you paid for, after all.”

“You delight in rubbing that in my face, don’t you?” Hannibal noted, voice still agonisingly quiet and gentle.

Will couldn’t stand it.

“Will… I don’t want you to answer that question because I’ve paid you. I want you to answer my question because you *want* to.”

“I don’t want to tell you how I feel. I don’t…,” Will trailed off, eyes resting on his coffee. “Why are you making this so difficult for me?”

Hannibal laughed, dry and indifferent all of a sudden. “All I’ve done is return the same honesty I’ve asked of you. I’m not intentionally making anything difficult for you, sweet boy. The only thing that’s difficult about this situation is that you’re conflicted over the fact you also wish I didn’t have to pay you, that you wish I wasn’t your client.”

Will’s eyes snapped up to meet Hannibal’s, glaring. Hannibal delighted in that ire.

“You think I’m stupid enough to *want* a client?” Will jeered, walls slamming up. “Don’t flatter yourself, Hannibal. You’re not the first and you won’t be the last - I’ve been here before, wishing that the person I’d just fucked hadn’t paid me, wishing they were something more. I’m not immune to attraction and I won’t pretend to be.”

Hannibal’s possessive, jealous beast stirred in his chest, displeased at the thought of Will wanting someone else. But he also couldn’t help but savour the claws they were digging into each other, the verbal swipes and stabs.

“I’m under no illusion that you won’t let yourself reconcile with what you feel about me,” Hannibal countered.

Will’s anger boiled slowly under his skin, swigging back the last of his coffee. “You want me to be honest?”

“Always.”

“Then yes, I am attracted to you. Yes, I wish you didn’t have to pay me and I wish this could have been something else because last night was… I’ve never…,” Will’s words died in his mouth, his heart pounding. “But you’re a client, Hannibal, and that’s all you’ll ever be. I meant it when I told you I don’t date, I don’t do whatever the fuck that was last night. Don’t fool yourself that you’ll ever be anything more than some guy who pays me to fuck him.”

Will’s words stung, bitterly so. They scraped and mauled at something deep inside of Hannibal in a way he was not familiar with at all. He didn’t know whether to reject that hurt or bathe in it, to drown himself in the new sensation of *feeling* that he’d been so desperately searching for so long for now.

“I must be a fool if I enjoy the way you hurt me so precisely with your words, with the way you see me,” Hannibal found himself confessing, regretting the truth that fell from his lips. “I’m sorry, Will. I’m sorry I’ve put you in this predicament.”

Will’s eyes fell to his watch again, lips tightening into a thin line. “Your twelve hours are over.”

Hannibal said nothing as Will got to his feet, pausing before he exited the kitchen. “Send that shirt to Elijah. He’ll pass it on to me.”

“Alright,” Hannibal sighed, rising from his seat and following Will out into the hall.

They stopped in the foyer, Hannibal gently handing Will’s coat back to him.

“Thank you for last night, Will,” Hannibal murmured.

Will’s face twisted into something sour. “Don’t make yourself sound so pathetic. You paid for it.”

Hannibal breathed in deeply, another flagellation to add to his collection from Will. “I did pay for it. And I’ll do it again, and thank you again.”

“You want to see me again?” Will asked sharply.

“Is it so hard to believe?”

“I thought you’d sate your curiosity. Get a taste of it and move on,” Will muttered, pulling his coat on and reaching for the door.

“Do I seem like the kind of man who gets a taste of something once, enjoys it, and then forgets all about it?” Hannibal bit back, voice flat and harsh.

Will found himself liking that darkness in Hannibal’s eyes more than he cared to admit.

“Till next time then, Doctor Lecter,” Will half sneered.

He was gone out the front door before Hannibal could utter another word.

Just Nineteen, A Sucker's Dream

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Special Needs

Eight years ago - Los Angeles

Stupid, stupid, stupid. Will cursed himself in his head over and over, sweating and trembling under the expectant gaze of the other men in the too small, too sweltering room.

“Well? We’re waiting.”

“I… this isn’t for me, I’m sorry,” Will whispered, his voice hoarse and weak. “I thought this was something else.”

“You thought this was actually an audition?” one of the men, the taller and broader of the two, snorted. “Come on, kid. You’re here now, and it’s good money. Shirt off.”

Will’s hands were *shaking* . The smaller man, his hair dyed an awful shade of ice-white blonde, stared him down like a shark.

“Sweet thing,” he cooed mockingly. “You’re gonna be great, don’t worry. It’ll be over in no time. You’ll get a pretty pay cheque at the end of it too, don’t forget.”

“But I didn’t come here to do this,” Will insisted, trying to steel himself. “I’m going to go, I… I’m sorry.”

The taller man clicked his tongue, stepping in front of the door. The room was plain, bare, except for the couch Will sat on. The couch Will had realised in horror was a *casting couch* . There was a desk opposite him where the two men sat, camera and lighting equipment already set up.

The bigger man in front of the door pulled a little clear bag out of his jacket pocket, white powder glinting inside. “Something to ease your nerves then?”

A knock on the door interrupted them, but the eyes of the two men opposite him lit up.

“Here’s your partner in crime,” the one with the icy blonde hair grinned, the door opening to reveal another boy who looked just as young as Will but nowhere near as nervous.

Will later learned the other boy’s name was Matthew, the man with the awful dye job was Spike, and his large, burly companion was Sidney.

Will wasn't sure if it was the gentleness in Matthew's eyes, or the waving of the pay cheque in his face, but for some reason Will gritted his teeth and agreed to do the shoot. The shoot, which he'd stupidly thought had really, genuinely been a casting call for a small part in a film.

Nineteen year old Will Graham had left Louisiana with big, stupid dreams, despite his father's yelling and chastising that he was an imbecile for thinking he could just rock up to Los Angeles and kick start the acting career he'd dreamed of for so long. Will realised how right his dad had been now; he should have stayed fixing motors in boat yards.

But here he was, feeling sick to his stomach, peeling his clothes away as Matthew's calloused hands skimmed down his ribs, lips locking with Will's.

"Try not to be so nervous," Matthew whispered against his ear as his long, pale fingers unbuckled Will's belt, sliding his jeans to the floor. "I'll try and make it as good for you as I can, but you need to at least pretend you're enjoying it if you want the money."

Will bit his lip, nodding the tiniest bit, trying his best not to look at the camera that was filming them. Matthew was careful with him, kissing up his thighs and mouthing over Will's clothed groin. Will groaned at the sensation - all of it was so *new* to him. Will had only ever done this a few times before, a couple of girls who were drunk and horny enough to corner him at parties and a handful of older college frat boys who'd relished in his tight, virgin ass.

Will thought the noises coming out of his mouth were ridiculous, but he couldn't help it - Matthew's tongue was laving against his cock, around his balls, swallowing him down expertly.

Will's head became mushy, losing track of time. Matthew handled him so attentively, easing him through the whole hellish thing. And Will did enjoy it, much to his shame. He came with stars in his eyes as Matthew's mouth and hands worked him over the edge, his release spattering over his own stomach as Matthew pulled off just in time. Will was like a rag doll, panting and compliant as he let Matthew guide him to his hands and knees on all fours on the couch, as he fed his cock past Will's lips and began to fuck his mouth tentatively.

Will gagged, drooled, but his mind was still detached and floating. He simply gripped Matthew's tensed thighs and let the other boy use his mouth, his grunts and groans filling the room.

"Close your eyes," Matthew hissed under his breath suddenly.

Will barely had time to register what this meant before Matthew was pulling out of Will's mouth, fisting his cock roughly over Will's face. Will shut his eyes just before Matthew came, gasping at the hot spray of cum landing over his still open mouth, his cheeks and brow.

Will didn't even know how much time had passed when he felt Matthew delicately wiping away his cum off of Will's face, Spike and Sidney packing up their filming equipment.

A cheque was thrust into Will's hand and all of a sudden he was sitting on the steps outside the tiny room he'd just been in, Spike and Sidney gone, Matthew crouched next to him as he lit up a cigarette.

"I thought it was an actual audition," Will found himself choking out, tears brimming in his eyes.

Matthew exhaled a long breath of smoke. "Oldest trick in the book, kid. You think you're the first pretty boy they've snatched up using that exact same method?"

"I'm so stupid," Will hissed, hiding his face in his hands.

Matthew said nothing, simply offering Will the cigarette he'd lit. Will shook his head, and Matthew shrugged.

"Listen, Will…" Matthew sighed. "I've been doing this for a couple of years and I know the first time is always the worst. But you got that cash they promised and nobody hurt you. It's a lot more than some of us in the industry could hope for, for our first times."

Will's lip curled in disgust. "I'm not *in* the industry. I don't do porn."

"You just did," Matthew pointed out, unfazed by Will's repulsion. "You may as well make some cash out of it now you've done it once. It's not bad money. Plus you'd never be short of shoots, not with that face and your body. You could get really good at this."

"I don't *want* to get good at this, or do that ever *again* ," Will spat. "I feel disgusting. I came here because I… I thought I could get into acting, not to fucking sell myself."

Matthew snorted. "You're just in shock, I get it. I know you didn't want to do this, but you took the money, Will. I know Spike and Sidney don't take no for an answer easily, but nobody forced you to do that shoot with me."

"I need the money," Will muttered. "I came to L.A. with nothing and I'm broke."

"There's your answer then," Matthew sighed, stretching his legs out before him like a cat in the sun. "Give me your number."

Will thought about telling Matthew to go to hell, but the other boy had treated him kindly, and was honest with Will at least - that, he could appreciate. Maybe Matthew might be his first and only friend in this godforsaken city, someone who could look out for him. So they exchanged numbers, and Matthew slunk to his feet as a Range Rover with tinted windows pulled up on the curb next to them.

"Well, that's my ride," Matthew informed him, tucking his hands into his pockets. "Nice meeting you, Will."

Will was about to reply, but then the driver's door opened. Will didn't know it, but the man that emerged from the car was about to become solely responsible for the hell that would be the next two years of Will Graham's life.

Dreams Of A Place With A Better Selection

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning for non-con, implied rape and assault.

Placebo - Burger Queen

Seven years ago - Los Angeles

“Good work today, Will,” Jack hummed, hot, heavy hand clamping down over Will’s bare shoulder as Will regained his breath, elbows resting over his knees.

Will swallowed. “Thanks.”

It was always good work; always a good shoot. Will had gotten over hating it, hating that he wasn’t half bad at getting fucked on camera.

Today’s shoot had been a threesome, and Will was exhausted, trying to simply get his breath back as he sat on the sofa he’d just been fucked on, the sofa the two other brawny, muscled men had spit-roasted him on. Will eyed them wearily across the room as they headed to the shower together.

They’d shot their film in an apartment - Will had lost count of how many apartments, hotel rooms, he’d been walked into by Crawford by now. The sound of the city below them drifted through the open windows, sunlight streaming past the pretty, white cotton curtains.

Will’s throat ached. His ass was sore.

"You want to get cleaned up here?” Jack asked, pocketing Will’s cheque the producer handed over to him.

“No,” Will grunted out, standing and reaching for his underwear. “Just take me home.”

“Alright,” Jack sighed.

Will didn’t bother saying goodbye to the crew, or the two other men he’d just filmed the scene with. He drifted behind Jack, following his hulking form to the elevator and out to Jack’s gleaming Range Rover. The disassociation after a shoot was always hard to shift.

Jack said nothing as they drove home, tapping his fingers over the steering wheel. Will closed his eyes and rested his head against the window.

Jack Crawford had, to an extent, taken Will under his wing. That afternoon when Will had sat on the curb with Matthew nearly sobbing in horror at the fact he'd just shot his first porno, unintentionally, Jack's eyes had zeroed in on Will like a man who'd just won the jackpot. He'd introduced himself to Will immediately and had somehow coaxed him into doing another shoot with Matthew. Jack had told Will he could help him, give him a place to stay permanently and a steady wage. Plus, Matthew would be there all the time too.

Crawford was a 'manager'. His home was also the home to four other boys in the industry, some of them seasoned like Matthew, some of them only a few months in. Jack managed their shoots, dropped them off and picked them up. Took care of the finances, the producers and the finer details that he assured Will would quickly become a strain if Will were to work all by himself with no one to help him. Jack had been doing this nearly all his life; Jack would take good care of Will. And Will, being so naive, so lost and broken, believed him. After a few weeks of moping about in shitty motels until the money from his shoot with Matthew ran out, Will called Crawford and accepted his offer.

And now here he was, a year later. His father didn't speak to him anymore; somehow, someone had found a video of Will, and it didn't take long for the small-town Will and his father were from to start whispering and gossiping about that 'filthy, disgusting' porno of Will. The boy who'd snuck off to Los Angeles to become a whore and left his poor father all alone. Some malicious busybody had the nerve to email Will's dad a link to the video, and Will's dad being the least tech savvy man in the world, had stupidly clicked on it. The phone call Will had received afterwards made it very, very clear that Will was no longer his son.

With no family and seemingly no other prospects on his horizon, Will had fully accepted that this was his life now. All he was good for. He wasn't Will Graham anymore; he was ' *Gorgeous Virgin Twink'* who got *'Pounded by Hairy Daddy'* , or the *'Teen With Sexy Body'* that ' *Sucks and Fucks Stepbro'.* Will had long since stopped rolling his eyes at the ridiculous titles of his shoots.

Los Angeles had quickly wiped away every trace of that nineteen year old boy Will had been. He was twenty now, and his life consisted of sleeping past noon, sex parties and strip clubs, porn shoots and whatever plate of drugs was getting passed around that night or on the set of the porno he was filming.

He'd been too nervous to film with anyone other than Matthew at first, feeling safe and comfortable with the older boy, who was two years older than Will but had been baptised into the world of porn at the tender age of eighteen. After a few months, however, Crawford grew impatient.

"There's only so many shoots you can do with Matthew," Crawford explained firmly. "You'll earn more money doing other stuff alongside all that twink shit."

Will had caved, just like he had with everything else. He hated how weak he was. Whatever Jack asked him to do, he did it. Because it kept him safe in Jack's house, food in his belly, close to his only friend Matthew, and drugged up enough that he didn't give a shit about that fact he was wasting his early adulthood in such a toxic environment. Will would never admit it to himself, or anyone else for that matter, but he was depressed. Lonely, hopeless and depressed. So much so that the only time he felt a flare of happiness was when he saw the

genuine pleasure and shock on the face of whoever he was filming with - when his co-stars' moans were genuine, when the grip on his waist and in his hair was in response to whatever toe-curling thing Will had said or done.

His self-worth was raked together in those meagre moments when he was on set, dizzy and desperate to get his partner (or partners) off.

And Jack saw that. Saw it and ran with it for all it was worth. Will stopped filming exclusively with guys, thrown in at the deep end in bisexual threesomes, orgies, and sometimes just, as Jack described it, ' *good old het porn'* . Will quickly became the boy in Jack's house who would get all the shoots, bring in all the money. It caused tensions to rise.

So much so that Anthony left. Anthony had been with Jack from the start and had always been Jack's favourite. But Jack's affections and his attention were fickle, and the moment Will started being in demand for shoots, Jack had dropped Anthony like a hot brick. The mother of all arguments ensued when Anthony finally decided he'd had enough.

"Go to hell Jack!"

Will winced as he heard a door slam upstairs, trying to eat his ramen in peace in the kitchen.

"Don't talk to me like that," Jack bellowed back. "Stop being stupid Anthony, put that fucking bag down and calm down!"

"I'm not staying here one more minute," Anthony seethed, footsteps stomping heavily on the floor above. "It's bullshit Jack, and you know it! You want me gone anyway, so I don't see what the problem is!"

"The problem is that you've lost your mind!" Jack retorted, another slam sounding from upstairs. "Is this how you thank me after everything I've done for you?! Storm out on me because you feel a little insecure?"

"That piece of shit comes along out of nowhere, takes dick well, and all of a sudden I'm old news? You haven't gotten me a shoot in weeks! You barely even look at me anymore, you're so bothered about that *boy* !"

"Keep your voice down," Jack hissed.

Will winced at the continued stomping of heavy feet, the closing and slamming of drawers as he pictured Anthony angrily stuffing everything he owned into a suitcase.

"I don't care! Let him hear me! Someone needs to bring him down a few pegs!"

And then:

"Did you hear that, Will? You're a piece of *shit* !"

Will glanced up, meeting Anthony's eyes through the doorway where he could see the other man leaning over the bannister of the stairs. Will said nothing; he didn't know *what* to say.

“Stop it,” Jack snapped at him again, seizing him by the wrist from behind and hauling him away from the bannister. “Unpack that damn bag and get yourself together. You’re not leaving, not throwing all this back in my face just because you’re jealous!”

“Throwing *what* back in your face, Jack? You would be nothing without me! I built this fucking thing from the ground up with you from day one, and this is how you want to end it? Telling me that I’m the one who should be grateful?!”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Jack sneered. “You were a jumped up, meth riddled little whore when I found you. You were begging for someone to save you. Maybe it’s my fault for letting you think you were so special, think that you could walk around this place like you owned it.”

Will’s skin had gone ashen, his stomach dropping. He’d seen glimmers of this streak he knew ran through Jack, but had no idea what to do now he was confronted with this explosion of temper from the two other men upstairs.

“Well, good riddance then, huh Jack? Shouldn’t you be glad to see me leaving?” Anthony snapped back, a heavy thunk and the first sounds of steps on the stairs.

“Your expiry date was coming around soon,” Jack spat.

The two of them appeared on the stairs from where Will could see through the doorway of the kitchen.

“Perfect then,” Anthony laughed wickedly. “Me getting the hell out of here won’t be an issue! You enjoy your new little toy, Jack, until the next one comes along and you have to throw *him* out too.”

“No one is throwing you out,” Jack yelled. “You’re the one packing your things and leaving!”

“I’m saving myself the indignity of *you* throwing me out! I’m not stupid! I can see it’s coming any day now, Jack!”

Anthony strode forwards a few steps, eyes blazing as they landed on Will sat silently in the kitchen. Will, who still looked so young, far too young for this kind of life. Will, whose spark had quite clearly sputtered and burnt out in the last year since he’d been here with Jack and the other boys. Anthony wanted to care, wanted to be kind, but he couldn’t. He was too hurt by Jack’s clear favouritism of Will.

“You wanna know something, Will?” Anthony grinned manically from the living room, not moving any closer to the kitchen. “Listen carefully, boy. This fucking scheming bastard that’s been feeding you sweet lies for the last year *does not care about you*. You think that pay cheque you get each month is even *half* of what you earn on shoots? He keeps most of it to himself, makes sure that neither you or any of the other boys in this house gets paid fairly. You’re a prisoner of your own making, Will.”

“What?” Will whispered, barely believing what he was hearing.

“ *Anthony* ,” Jack growled in warning, lunging for the other man.

Anthony side-stepped him, barely. “He keeps you all strung out on drugs and parties and showers you in little presents and praise, but you’re selling yourself for *nothing* , Will. He keeps nearly all the fucking money you earn.”

Jack struck Anthony so hard across the face the other man fell to the floor, a startled yelp escaping his lips.

“Shut your fucking mouth, you liar,” Jack thundered, the rage in his eyes palpable.

Anthony laughed, sounding insane, rolling onto his back on the floor where he still lay. “You see, Will? You see his temper when you try to tell the truth? He’ll have you wasting away, stuffed with cock until you’re no use anymore, until you don’t make him a dime. Then he’ll dump you back on the street right where he found you and you’ll have *nothing* . Whose bedroom do you think you got to have when you first arrived here, huh?”

Jack hauled Anthony up from the floor, gripping him by the front of his shirt. Will felt sick as Jack slammed Anthony against the wall, his head hitting it with a thud. Tears began to stream down Will’s face.

“His name was Jimmy,” Anthony continued, smiling as if he’d lost his mind, eyes still fixed on Will. “He was just like you, Will. Plucked up off the street as a young little naive thing who'd’ just landed in L.A., sold a pack of lies. Jack used him and used him until Jimmy couldn’t be used any more, kicked out of the house with no money. He’s on fucking Skid Row now, selling himself, addicted to the fucking drugs that Jack got him hooked on in the first place.”

“Say one more word and I’ll knock you the hell out,” Jack bellowed, the rage in his voice making Will want to cower. “Get your things and get out, you fucking whore. I don’t want to see you or hear from you ever again.”

“Gladly,” Anthony cackled, stumbling forwards as Jack let him go.

He snatched his case and made for the door, casting one last look over his shoulder at Will. “Good luck, Will. Fuck knows you’ll need it.”

“ *Out* !” Jack roared.

Anthony left. Jack stood there, shoulders heaving with rage. Everything went quiet for a moment, and then Jack turned on his heel and looked at Will.

“He’s a liar, Will. He’s poisonous.”

“I…,” Will trailed off, not sure why he’d even bothered opening his mouth. What could he possibly say?

Jack wiped a hand over his face, eyes blank once more. “You’ve got a shoot at four. Make sure you’re ready and meet me down here an hour before.”

“Today?” Will repeated, dumbfounded. “But I have a shoot tonight as well, Jack.”

“Yeah, well,” Jack muttered, heading for the stairs. “You’re in demand, Will. You should be thankful you’re so popular, make the most of it. It’ll be easy though, don’t worry. You’re topping in the shoot this afternoon.”

“But Jack, the shoot tonight… it’s a fucking gangbang scene, I’m getting fucked by five different guys,” Will protested, eyes wide.

Jack sighed heavily, turning back from the stairs and heading to Will in the kitchen. From the pocket in his jacket, he withdrew a little packet of white powder. He tossed it on to the table in front of Will.

“You’ll be fine, Will.”

Jack turned and left.

After what happened with Anthony, and the hell of a night Will endured during those shoots, Will couldn’t help the doubt that grew day by day about Jack. He’d seen the man’s anger, his violence. His dismissiveness of Will’s reluctance to do those two shoots in one day, merely plying Will with more drugs and booze when Will had been wrecked after the gangbang shoot. Matthew had crawled into his bed that night, hearing Will’s muffled cries through the walls. He’d simply held Will, neither of them saying a word. As if Matthew knew too, everything that Anthony had known, but was too scared to say or do anything.

When Jack was out one afternoon, dropping one of the other boys off at a shoot, Will said to hell with it. He picked the lock on Jack’s office and quietly let himself inside.

It didn’t take much snooping for Will to find Jack’s accounting books and diaries, logs on his computer of all the finances. Anthony had been right. Jack was hoarding the money the other boys and Will earnt, letting them wear themselves down shoot after shoot, keeping them pliant with drugs whilst he banked their money. Yes, Jack provided everything, the food, the house, the clothes on Will’s back. Will wanted to go and blow a few hundred dollars in a bar? Jack gave him the money. Will spotted a fancy piece of jewellery or new pair of shoes he wanted? Jack handed over his card. But none of that, *none of it* , made up for the fact Will was being robbed blind after he scoured through Jack’s very precise bookkeeping.

Jack always pocketed the pay cheque the producer handed over on the set after the cameras were off. Never told the boys how much they were getting paid, how many zeros were on that cheque.

Will’s blood boiled.

And so Will did the one thing he knew would hit Jack where it hurt, even if it hurt Will in the process.

A few months after Anthony had left, Will finally worked up the courage to put his plan in action. It took about two weeks for Jack to figure it out, realise what Will had done.

Will's bedroom door slammed open as Will was in the middle of getting dressed for the day, exhausted and groggy from the party they'd all had last night at some friend of Jack's. He thought he might still be high.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" Jack seethed, teeth gritted and eyes blazing in the same way Will had witnessed with Anthony.

Will blinked at him blankly. "Getting dressed."

"Don't play fucking dumb with me," Jack snarled. "What the fuck were you doing on Skid Row two nights ago, turning tricks?"

"Earning some money," Will told him flatly. "Sucking dick. The usual things people do on Skid Row."

"You must have lost your mind," Jack declared. "Do you know how much value you decrease from yourself if producers find out you've been whoring yourself on Skid Row?"

"There it is," Will scoffed. "The real reason you're mad. You're worried about losing money because I sold myself?"

"Of course that's what I'm fucking worried about, Will! We have a business to run here, a roof to keep over our heads!"

"You're joking, right? You could retire tomorrow if you wanted! You don't need another penny, we've all worked so much for you!"

"You don't know what you're talking about," Jack chastised him. "I don't wanna hear that you've set foot in that foul place again."

"I've been whoring myself out there for the last two weeks Jack," Will laughed maliciously. "I'll be a regular before I know it. And then you won't have to worry about me, because I'll be earning my own keep. Seeing as it's *so* important the money keeps coming in, isn't it?"

"You stupid little brat," Jack cursed, stepping forwards.

Will didn't back down, holding his ground as Jack got in his space. "What? Are you upset about my so-called value depreciating?"

"You live in this house, you follow my rules," Jack snarled. "You went behind my back!"

"Whilst you take my fucking money?!"

"Where do you think the money fucking goes! How do you think the bills get paid round here, where your new clothes and your drugs come from? When you go and spend a fortune drinking yourself blind in bars?!"

“Anthony was right,” Will retorted. “You’re robbing us blind, keeping all that money we earnt. What’s the difference really, Jack? Because I don’t see how me turning tricks on Skid Row is any different to getting sent into a shoot by you, apart from the fact I get to keep all the money I earnt out there and *you* keep what’s rightfully mine from the shoots!”

“Ungrateful brat,” Jack hissed. “Do you know what would have happened to you if I hadn’t met you that day? You were pathetic, snivelling on the sidewalk about the fact you’d just gotten *paid* to suck Matthew’s dick. You would have been snatched up by someone far, *far* worse than me, Will, don’t you ever forget that.”

“You’re a bastard,” Will sneered, hurling the insult at the man who towered before him.

Jack’s temper snapped, and he struck Will across the face so hard Will stumbled backwards, colliding with the dresser behind him. Before Will could react, Jack was on him again, another hit striking across Will’s face. His hands wrapped around Will’s throat, pinning him against the dresser where he half slumped, half stood.

“You wanna be a whore, Will? You wanna turn tricks? *Fine* . But you’re gonna see that crossing me, going against everything I work to provide for you, was the worst decision you ever made,” Jack threatened him, fingers squeezing tighter around Will’s jugular.

Will gasped for air, legs kicking helplessly against the ground, scratching at the hands that were cutting off his air.

Jack’s fist landed square on Will’s face, pain blooming instantly behind Will’s right eye socket and nose. Jack released him, letting Will drop to the floor and heave for breath.

“You’re not leaving this fucking house again, stupid whore,” Jack spat at him.

Will barely heard him, merely watched his feet retreat and disappear out of his bedroom, the door slamming behind him.

Matthew found him in the same position an hour later after he got back from a shoot, his face grim and solemn as he hauled Will up and sat him on his bed. He iced Will’s face, dabbed the blood away and forced some aspirin down Will.

“You’re a fucking idiot,” Matthew told him under his breath, careful to keep quiet. “What were you thinking, turning tricks on Skid Row?”

“Wanted to piss him off,” Will admitted weakly, voice hoarse. “He’s keeping all our money, Matthew. I picked the lock on his office and went through all his books and logs. We get next to nothing from what we actually earn from those shoots he makes us do.”

“You think I don’t know that?” Matthew muttered, pressing the ice harder against Will’s swollen face, ignoring Will’s wince. “Of course he does, Will. He’s a pimp.”

“Then why do you stay?”

“Because I have nowhere else to go, and I’ve gotten used to the amount of shoots I do. Once you get past that, it’s not all bad.”

Will shook his head. “I don’t wanna live like this anymore.”

Matthew sighed, but squeezed Will’s hand. “You’ll be alright, I promise.”

Matthew’s promise did not ring true. Will woke up a few days later to the sound of drilling and wood creaking. He was hungover, on a comedown from the coke he’d miserably snorted by himself the night before in the empty kitchen whilst the other boys and Jack were at a party.

It took a while for Will to realise what had happened.

A lock. Jack had installed a fucking lock on his bedroom door that could only be unlocked from the outside. He was a prisoner in his own bedroom.

Will banged and yelled like a wildcat in a cage.

The door didn’t budge. Nobody came.

A few hours later, the sound of the lock turning had Will bolting up in bed. The door swung open to reveal Jack stood with a man Will had never seen before, his hair greasy and eyes beady.

“You don’t mind the black eye, do you?” Jack chuckled to the stranger standing next to him. “He won’t disappoint you, I promise.”

A thick lump formed in Will’s throat when he realised what was about to happen. What Jack had meant when they’d had their bust up a few days ago.

You wanna be a whore, Will? You wanna turn tricks? Fine. But you’re gonna see that crossing me, going against everything I work to provide for you, was the worst decision you ever made .

Jack was going to whore him out, right here in his own bedroom. He was going to be raped.

“Jack, no,” Will pleaded, pressing himself against the wall. “I won’t do it Jack. I *won’t* .”

Jack ignored him as if he wasn’t even there, still focusing on the stranger in Will’s bedroom doorway. “Be gentle with him, he’s still getting used to this.”

“I will,” the stranger replied, licking his lips in a way that made Will’s skin crawl. “You want the money now?”

Jack nodded. He looked Will in the eye the whole time the man handed over the wad of bills, made a fucking show of counting each note. Then he slid the money into his pocket and turned and left.

It went on for months. Strange men and women let into his bedroom, money passed into Jack’s hand, and then Jack would leave. Will had lost count of how many men bent him over,

how many women straddled him down to the bed and rode him.

Jack was torturing him.

And Will could feel himself slowly erasing away into nothing, even less of a person he'd been when he was dragged from shoot to shoot, party to party.

Until Matthew unlocked his door one morning, wide eyed and breathless.

"Get up," Matthew hissed. "Get the hell up, you son of a bitch."

"...Matthew?"

Will was dragged from his bed, shoved out of the room. "What's going on?"

"Jack's out of town for the day, won't be back till tomorrow. You need to go now," Matthew explained hurriedly, shoving a pre-packed bag into Will's hands.

"You're serious?" Will hissed, stomach flipping.

Matthew nodded. "Come on, get going."

" *Wait* . There's something I need to do before I go."

A few hours later, Will was knocking on the door of that dingy little room he'd met Matthew in two years ago.

Sidney opened the door, looking like he needed a good hot meal and a shower.

"Will?"

Will barged in without a word, shouldering past Sidney. He went straight to the little office at the back he'd since discovered existed after that first shoot in this room, flinging the door open. Spike was inside, sat at the computer editing clips from a shoot.

"What a pleasant surprise," Spike grinned. "Here for a quickie, gorgeous? We haven't seen you in months."

"Jack's had me locked up in the house and has been whoring me out," Will supplied flatly, slamming a duffle bag down onto Spike's desk.

Sidney made a choked sound behind him. "He *what* ?"

"I said, Jack's had me locked - "

"I heard you, I fucking heard you," Sidney cut him off. "Jesus, he's lost his mind."

"It doesn't matter," Will muttered. "I came here to make a deal with you."

Spike lifted a brow. "What kind of deal?"

“Forty-five grand to erase every single video you shot of me and to never work with Jack Crawford or any of his boys again. Forty-five grand to drag his name through the mud with every producer you know, and don’t fucking lie to me Spike that you don’t know any, because I *know* you do.”

Spike blinked. “You got that money right now kid?”

Will unzipped the bag, letting Spike and Sidney see inside. Their eyes lit up at the sight of stack upon stack of bills.

Spike let out a low whistle. “Where’d you get that from?”

“Crawford. He won’t work out that you have it though, don’t worry. I left him a voicemail saying I took it all with me.”

Will didn’t mention the five grand he’d kept for himself in his bag of meagre belongings.

“You sure?” Sidney asked, eyes flashing with worry. “I don’t want Crawford or his cronies knocking on our door.”

“Be clever about how you discredit him and drag his name through the mud and he won’t,” Will snapped at Sidney. “Listen, do you want the money or not?”

“Even if we tell everyone to stop working with him, Will, he won’t go out of business. There are producers that will work with anyone. People that won’t believe us, people that will question why we’re trying to steer them away from him.”

“It’s forty-five grand, Spike. How long would it take you to earn that normally?”

Spike clenched his jaw, keeping quiet. Sidney reached forwards and zipped the bag up again.

“Deal,” Sidney grumbled. “We’ll take the videos off all the sites they’re on, delete the footage. We’ll spread the word to stay away from Crawford.”

Will simply nodded curtly. “I wasn’t here. You haven’t seen me in months.”

“Can’t even remember what your name was, to be honest,” Spike agreed, sitting back in his chair. “Just what your pretty little ass looked like.”

Will scoffed, then turned on his heel and left.

A few hours later, he was on a greyhound bus heading north-east.

Every Sky Is Blue, But Not For Me And You

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Come Home

Seven years ago - Las Vegas

The life of a casino whore was not as glamorous as Will had hoped it would be. Competition was tough, but he got by, loitering in casinos and even sometimes finding himself amongst lot lizards at truck stops. He'd found a shady little apartment with a six-month lease when he'd arrived in Vegas, figuring he'd stick it out here for half a year and keep his head down. Where he'd go from here, Will didn't know. But he was coping. Healing, slowly.

Will woke up most nights (or days, depending on how long he'd been out the night before working) with a scream trapped in his throat, pouring with sweat and gasping for air. The sound of the lock on his old bedroom door in Jack's house being unlocked, the creak of the door hinges, rang in his ears like a deafening boom. Will would heave himself from bed, dunk his head in a sink filled with cold water, peel his sweat soaked shirt from his body, and lay a towel down on the bed. He would repeat a mantra over and over in his head as he shuddered and tried to fall back asleep; *I'm out. It's over. I'm out. It's over.*

Will's fragile, lonely peace shattered three months after he'd arrived in Vegas.

"You busy, honey?"

Will fixed a smile on his face. Took a deep breath. Relaxed his soldiers. Turned to meet the man who'd approached him.

He was in one of the casinos he frequented, absentmindedly swirling his half-drunk cocktail around at the bar. He was tired tonight; didn't feel up to approaching any potential johns yet. Not that Will always needed to; most of the men and women who bought Will's body eyed him hungrily and stalked up to him within an hour of seeing him. The other casino whores glared at how easily they flocked to him.

Will's smile was sickly sweet, body draped coyly over the bar. His eyes scanned over the man before him, and his heart sputtered.

Will recognised him; his name wasn't anywhere in Will's memory, but his face was. He was a friend of Jack's, a friend who used to throw parties nearly every other night. A friend who smirked as he sat with spread legs on his sofa whilst strung out, skinny girls danced in his lap

for a line of whatever drug was neatly wracked up on the mirror he kept beside him. Will was pretty sure he remembered Anthony on his knees once, sucking the guy off, for a whole bag of coke whilst Jack had been preoccupied and had his back turned.

Will pretended he didn't remember him, kept his face schooled into polite neutrality before the spark of alarm and recognition was visible in his eyes.

"It might not look like it, but I am, actually," Will smiled, a saccharine grin stretching across his mouth. "But I'd be more than happy to send you in the direction of one of my friends over there."

Will felt the press of the end of a gun into his thigh, hidden from sight by the man's proximity to Will, and kept that grin on his face, unfaltering. His heart, however, felt like it might explode.

"What was your name again?" Will asked softly, bedroom eyes still fixed on the man.

"Stop playing," the man hissed. "You're gonna get up and walk out of here with me, real slowly, like everything is normal. You understand? Scream and I'll put you out of your fucking misery."

Will huffed a soft laugh, some alien, emboldened part of him leaning into the gun digging into his thigh. "And go where, exactly?"

The man's lip curled. "Jack's paying you a visit."

"He is? How exciting," Will drawled.

The gun pressed harder into the flesh of Will's thigh through his trousers. "Up you get, whore."

Will obeyed, wondering if he could dart out of the way of this friend of Jack's and walk away with just a surface wound. If he could run quick enough to hide, weave his way through the halls of the casino, disappear into the attached hotel and wait it out. He wondered whether there were even any bullets in that gun, or if it was all just a ruse. But the fifty grand Will had stolen from Jack most likely meant that the gun was fully loaded, each bullet engraved with Will's initials.

Will swallowed heavily against the thick lump in his throat. He should have known better than to think that Jack Crawford was just going to let him waltz away with fifty grand. Jack's friend led Will out of the casino and down the street, round the corner, the gun pressed into Will's lower spine the whole time. Will felt like he was being walked to his own execution; perhaps he was.

They kept walking until they reached a jeep waiting down a quieter side street, engine on and windows tinted. Jack's friend opened the backseat door for Will, roughly shoving him inside of the jeep.

Crawford sat inside, eyes blazing the minute Will was forced into the vehicle. He smiled; it was cold and dead.

“Hello, Will,” Jack greeted him, the air in the jeep heavy and oppressive.

Will shrank back onto the seat opposite Jack, his heart hammering in his chest. Jack’s friend slid into the jeep, shutting the door, sitting himself next to Will and keeping the gun trained on him. Will said nothing, keeping his mouth tightly shut.

Jack raised an eyebrow. “Having fun out here in Vegas?”

Will remained quiet, eyes wide and fixed on Jack. The gun pressed against Will’s side.

“It’s alright, Zeller,” Crawford sighed, waving his hand at the gun in dismissal. “Will’s bright enough to know he should stay put.”

Zeller made a non-committal noise in the back of his throat, tucking the hand gun away. Crawford lent forwards, elbows on his knees and swept his gaze over Will.

“Gave me a run for my money there, didn’t you, Will? Quite literally,” Jack laughed dryly. “Took a while to find you.”

Will still said nothing, not quite sure what would come out of his mouth if he did. Jack frowned.

“I’m not here to haul you back to L.A.,” Jack informed him. “In case you were wondering.”

“You’re not here for a quick catch up, either,” Will rasped. “I don’t have the money, Jack. You came all this way for nothing.”

“Then where is it? Have you gambled it all away?”

“I’m not telling you,” Will breathed. “It’s gone. That’s all you need to know.”

“You know, when I listened to that voicemail you left me, telling me you’d taken what you felt I owed you… I thought you were joking. But then I came home and you were *gone* . Didn’t matter how badly I roughed up Matthew, he didn’t seem to know where you went.”

“You hurt him?” Will hissed.

“There’s only so far words can get you, Will,” Jack huffed, sitting back in his seat a little. “When I realised Matthew really didn’t know where you were, I apologised to him. I may have gone a little overboard.”

“Where is he now?” Will demanded, sick at the thought of the only person who'd ever been good to him those whole two years suffering because he’d helped Will.

“Still at home. Still working, doing shoots… Matthew knows not to bite the hand that feeds him. Unlike *you* .”

“You locked me in my room and let me be raped. For *months* . Stealing that money from you wasn’t anywhere near enough what you deserve,” Will cursed, teeth gritted in rage.

Jack laughed. “And yet here you are, still selling yourself. It’s all you can do now, isn’t it, Will? You don’t know any other way of living.”

“What do you *want* , Jack?” Will snapped, tiring of Jack’s taunts. “You didn’t come all this way to laugh at me.”

“No, I didn’t. I came to tell you that I could take you back to L.A., whore you out again until you earn back every last dollar, but you’re not worth the trouble. But you’re going to pay me back, Will, whether it takes you the rest of your life.”

“Or what?” Will scoffed.

The smile that spread across Jack's face sent Will’s blood cold. “I had an offer a while ago from a producer who’s into more… obscure content. He produces snuff films.”

Will froze.

“And Matthew would be perfect, I reckon,” Jack concluded. “So unless you don’t want me to tell that producer I’ve got a boy lined up for him for his next film, you’ll pay me back.”

“You wouldn’t do that,” Will choked out, feeling like he might actually vomit.

“Wouldn’t I?” Jack snarled, baring his teeth. “Zeller.”

Will flinched, but Zeller ignored him and retrieved a laptop from under the seat he was sitting on. He pulled it open and gripped one hand on the back of Will’s neck, forcing his head to look at the screen. The screen, which was paused on a video of…

“Press play, Zeller. Let Will see what’s in store for Matthew if he doesn’t pay me back.”

Zeller hit the spacebar, and the film resumed. The sounds of screams filled the car, and Will knew, as he tried his best to keep his vomit down, that he would never forget what he saw on that screen for as long as he lived.

“That’s enough,” Will sobbed, scrunching his eyes closed. “Stop it. That’s enough, Jack.”

The screams continued. Will kept his eyes shut.

Jack lent forwards and slammed the lip of the laptop shut. “It’s real, Will. And it pays well, better than any other shoot possibly could. If you want to spare Matthew from that, you know what you need to do.”

“Alright,” Will wheezed. “I get it, I’ll… I’ll pay you back, I swear.”

“I know you will,” Jack crooned, grinning icily. “And don’t worry, Will, I won’t set a deadline. But I expect you to pay me back every month, even if it’s just fifty dollars. You see, I’m not all that bad, am I?”

Will pressed his lips into a tight, thin line. He had nothing left to say; was scared if he opened his mouth again he'd empty his stomach all over Jack's jeep.

"I'd say it was lovely to see you again, but it wasn't," Jack chuckled to himself. "Now, I suggest you get the hell out of here. Get far, far away from California, because if I see you ever again, I won't be so kind next time we run into each other."

Before Will could move, Zeller was dragging him from the Jeep and back out into the night. Will struggled in his grip, but that gun was pressed against his temple this time.

"Get the fuck off of me," Will snarled.

Zeller's grip was like iron. "What, you didn't think that was the end of it, did you?"

Will flailed and kicked as he was dragged between the tiny, dingy alley between two run down buildings that had been boarded up. Zeller tossed him to the ground like he weighed nothing - which, Will supposed he didn't. The last few years of appetite-suppressing drugs to keep himself in that hateful 'twink' body that Jack insisted on had left Will faring for the worst.

Zeller's fists and feet rained down on him, relentlessly. Will was grateful when he finally lost consciousness.

When Will came to, he was laid in a hospital bed in a private room. He couldn't feel anything, except the grogginess floating in his brain, clutched in the sweet grasp of morphine. The nurse that was tending to him regarded him with suspicion and wariness.

"And you have no memory of what happened?" she asked, topping up Will's IV fluids.

"No," Will lied, voice scratchy and faint. "I really don't remember. Listen, I… I need to discharge myself. I don't have insurance."

The nurse shook her head. "I wouldn't recommend discharging yourself just yet, you're still in pretty bad shape."

"But I can't afford - "

"Your… friend… got in touch with the hospital and told us to forward him the bill. Told you not to worry and that it's all taken care of," the nurse informed him, voice laced with suspicion. "I'm guessing that's who dropped you off here?"

"I don't remember being dropped off here," Will sighed. Not a lie, this time.

"Well, you're lucky you've got someone looking out for you," the nurse smiled, an attempt at warmth.

Will nodded faintly, his head spinning.

Will discharged himself two days later, still wincing and hissing at the pain that shot up every limb of his body, winded him to his core. Inside of his jacket pocket there was an envelope with his name on the front, an envelope that had not been there when Will had left his apartment the night that Jack had found him. Inside, there were the details of the bank account Will was to pay the money back to and a note:

Don't worry about the hospital bills, whore. Think of it as a freebie. I won't add it onto the money you already owe me.

Will burnt the note in his kitchen sink the night that he packed his bags and left Vegas, trying to calm the nausea within him at the thought of the snuff film Jack had shown him. At the thought of Matthew, his only friend, getting sold out by Jack into a snuff. His wicked brain imagined all too vividly Matthew pale on the ground, drenched in his own blood, limbs dismembered and strewn next to his lifeless body.

He wished he'd never met Matthew.

A Race For Rats To Die

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Slave to the Wage

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Present day - Baltimore

"Fuck yeah, like that!"

Will dug his fingers into his client's writhing hips, holding her down as his tongue speared her, sucking against her clit.

"Will," she sighed, chest heaving as she twitched above him. "Don't stop, keep… *oh* , keep going."

She rode his face shamelessly, and Will wasn't afraid to admit she was beautiful in her pleasure, riding the waves of her orgasm as it built. He gladly let her use his mouth, let her grind her cunt down over his mouth. He worshipped her with his tongue, squeezing the globes of her ass in his palms to steady her as she rocked her hips.

Will felt her tense and he moaned as she began to convulse, her orgasm snatching her up. She gasped, breath hitched, eyes rolling back in her head. Will eased her down from it, gently licking against her clit as she shuddered from the waves of aftershock.

"Oh my god," she panted, slumping down onto the bed next to him. "I can't remember the last time I came that hard."

"Yeah?" Will grinned wolfishly, shifting to hover over her, kneeling between her legs. "Let's see if we can fix that."

Her eyes flashed in delight as he rolled the condom down onto himself, lining up his throbbing cock and easing himself inside of her wet, tight heat.

"Holy *fuck* ," she choked, tossing her head back.

Will leaned forwards, kissing her neck and humming gently as he began to thrust.

Will tucked the generous tip away in his back pocket as he buttoned up his shirt, watching his client, Carla, slinging her heels back onto her pedicured feet. She righted her dress, smoothed down her hair and reapplied her lipstick in the mirror of the hotel room dresser.

“Back to reality now,” Carla sighed, reaching for her coat.

Will beat her to it, sliding it onto her arms for her smoothly. “I hope it’s not too awful.”

“Empires don’t build themselves, unfortunately,” she laughed airily, picking her purse back up and heading for the door. “Thanks for this afternoon, Will. Stay and enjoy the room for the rest of the night if you want to, it’s paid for.”

“It’s alright, but thank you,” Will declined politely, settling back to sit on the bed again.

Never leave with a client; leave first or wait thirty minutes after they’ve gone. That was one of the rules.

“Let’s hope I can concentrate in this board meeting this evening,” Carla smirked, winking at him on her way out. “See you later, Will.”

Will waved at her wordlessly, collapsing back onto the bed with a groan once she was gone and the door to the hotel room was shut once more.

Carla was an on-off client, a business woman in her early forties who liked to take Will to expensive lunches and then fuck him in a nice hotel afterwards when she wanted to blow off some steam, too busy and disdainful for the “bullshit” that came along with modern dating. Will liked her; liked her honesty. Liked the way she gasped and moaned when she came, the way she grinned as he fucked her over the arm of a couch or into the mattress.

It had been almost two weeks since his booking with Hannibal, and Will’s head was still a mess. Everything about the man had turned Will’s logic on its head, challenged his resolute morals that he absolutely, under no circumstance, let himself develop feelings for a client. Will had struggled with attraction to his clients before, especially the ones like Hannibal - the wealthy, charming older men who took care of him, fucked him like there was no tomorrow. Even still, he’d never felt that level of intensity during sex that he had with Hannibal, always able to shut that part of himself down and remind himself it was just his job. Hannibal Lecter had opened a can of worms inside of Will, and the repercussions were driving Will insane.

Will had swallowed his pride and admitted to himself that it wasn’t just attraction that had him held in Hannibal’s grasp; it was the way he didn’t shy away from Will’s sharp edges, the way he delighted in Will’s bitterness, seemed to crave every ounce of what and who Will was. It was the way they’d been virtually strangers, but after that night, Will had found himself craving more nights in Hannibal’s home, at his table, eating his food and drinking his cognac and letting the older man fulfil all his basic needs, the dark little selfish parts of himself that Will tried to stamp out. The parts of him that had been gleeful at the collection of shirts Elijah had passed on to Will from Hannibal that had clearly cost thousands of dollars.

It was the fact that Hannibal could unwittingly help Will save Matthew Brown. The fact that Hannibal may well be Will’s ticket to freedom.

The money Hannibal had paid for his evening with Will was astronomical. So much so that Will had gotten startlingly closer to paying back the full amount he owed Crawford. Hannibal

must be sitting on a fortune if he could spend money on Will like that, and if the older man was so adamant on seeing Will again…

Will was tired. So tired, tired of keeping his head above water, tired of fucking and getting fucked for money. He wanted to leave this life behind, retreat to somewhere quiet where nobody knew him. He wanted to go to sleep at night without the threat of Matthew's life being on the line dangled over him. And as much as Will fantasised about a passionate and real love affair with Hannibal, as much as Will knew he'd found a kindred soul after being used by countless others, Will was not above using Hannibal if it meant he could walk away from this life. From his past, from the debt he owed Crawford.

Will had a proposition for Hannibal. A proposition that Elijah was most likely going to hate, but Will didn't care. He could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

"That shade of blue suits you," Hannibal complimented, voice smooth and low.

"You matched it to my eyes far too well for me to not appreciate your eye for detail," Will grinned lazily, fingertips trailing down the stem of his wine glass. "Thank you, Hannibal."

"So full of manners and agreeableness this evening," Hannibal teased him, the warm, low lights of the restaurant making his eyes seem a deeper amber than usual.

"I'm on my best behaviour."

"Is that so? What's brought that on?"

"Buttering you up for the proposition I'm about to make you," Will sighed, smiling slyly at the doctor across the table.

They'd finished their meals, desserts long since eaten, and were now finishing their second bottle of red wine that Hannibal had ordered. Will hated to admit his taste in wine and food were ridiculously sophisticated, the wine stroking down his tongue and throat.

Hannibal quirked a brow. "Oh?"

Will bit his lip through his smile. " I think you'll like it."

"Well don't keep me waiting," Hannibal chuckled in amusement.

Will braced himself, then began.

"I've had a lot of time to reflect on what happened the other night," Will started slowly, carefully. "And I was awful to you in the morning, after that night. I shouldn't have been so harsh. I said a lot of things purely for the sake of hurting you, because I didn't want to face how I feel."

"I know, Will."

“Of course you know; I can’t seem to hide things from you easily. And I don’t want to, I don’t want to treat you so poorly again. It scared me, realising how much I wanted you beyond the physical. How much I wanted to indulge in the things I never let myself.”

“It’s not hedonism to allow yourself the things you deserve,” Hannibal said softly, eyes trailing over Will’s face. “You don’t have to say it out loud for me to see that you’ve never let yourself be cherished. Loved.”

Will cringed. “I don’t… I’ve never felt seen by anybody, Hannibal. Maybe because you were the only person who really could but… I want to explore the possibility of a life beyond this. What you asked me the other night, about how surely I’d wanted something for myself other than this life - I do. I don’t quite know what that is anymore, but I want to find out. And I want to see whether you’re a part of that.”

“And what does this have to do with your proposition?”

“Maybe I’m being too forward, and you’re well within your rights to laugh me out of this restaurant and tell me I’ve overstepped my mark,” Will sighed, “but I’m willing to… to stop seeing other clients.”

“On the condition of what?” Hannibal asked sharply, sensing the hook immediately.

“On the condition that you’re my only client.”

Hannibal’s eyes narrowed. “You want to stop escorting, but still desire me to pay you?”

Will flushed, looking away. “There are things I need to… smooth over.”

“And why not pursue another path? Earn a living another way?”

“Because there’s nothing that will earn me the money I need in such a short space of time,” Will admitted, taking a gulp of wine to ease the confession.

“The money that *I’m* willing to pay you in such a short space of time,” Hannibal corrected, eyes grave.

Will’s stomach dropped; this was going horribly. He’d been such an idiot to think Hannibal would take the bait so easily.

“I understand if you don’t want anything to do with it,” Will said quietly, unable to meet Hannibal’s gaze. “I must seem wretched to you.”

There was a pause from Hannibal, in which Will still couldn’t look at Hannibal, couldn’t face him.

“You don’t appear wretched to me, Will,” Hannibal responded eventually, words weighted carefully. “I know you’re not telling me the whole truth, and I won’t push you to. But you know I would rather pursue you without having it cost me. You know I wish I could be sitting here with you tonight without having to *share* you.”

Will grit his teeth. “I’m trying, Hannibal. I can’t give you one without the other, I… I can’t stop escorting because I need the money. But you don’t have to share me with anyone else, not if you…”

“Not if I pay you to stop sharing yourself,” Hannibal finished for him.

“I wish it wasn’t like this,” Will told him, truthfully. “I wish I was something else. I wish that night at the bar when we bumped into each other again, you’d been able to just charm me, make me laugh, let me take you home to my shitty apartment and let you take me apart. Because this is just as difficult for me, when I can *see* … see how you’d treat me, make sure I never feel alone again.”

“Don’t forget that I knew what you were when I got into this…I don’t want you to be alone, Will,” Hannibal breathed, face solemn. “Not when all those jagged pieces about yourself that you hate so much fit so perfectly against my own sharp edges.”

“Hannibal… I’m trapped in a prison of my own making,” Will admitted, laughing bitterly. “The things I did in my past mean that I *can’t* stop escorting, not until I’ve fixed the mess I made. But it’s been *hell* the last few weeks trying to work, trying to sit there and smile at my clients when all I can think about is *you* .”

“And this is the compromise,” Hannibal added, observing the way his wine swirled in his glass as he swished it. “I can have you all to myself, but it’s still at a cost.”

“I’m sorry, Hannibal. I understand if you don’t want that, don’t want to… to see me again.”

If Hannibal didn’t want him, it would be ok, Will told himself. Back to the drawing board. Back to escorting like he had been for the last three years until he could pay Crawford off and be assured Matthew was safe.

Back to despising every fibre of his stupid, reckless being.

“I hope that one day you can tell me what happened to you,” Hannibal replied, dodging Will’s suggestion of rejection. “How you trapped yourself into this life. But I understand, Will, that sometimes the only person that can free you is yourself.”

Will looked up at him, meeting those amber eyes. “Can I ask for something?”

“Anything,” Hannibal answered immediately, lips parted.

Hannibal would carve off pieces of himself and offer them up on a silver platter if it was what Will wanted.

“I don’t want to go back to your house, or to a hotel tonight,” Will began, voice wary. “I can’t tell you the whole truth, Hannibal, but I can let you in more than I have with anyone else. I want you to come back to my apartment.”

“That’s not allowed,” Hannibal pointed out, somewhat startled by the suggestion. “Elijah doesn’t let clients know where his escorts live. Their addresses.”

“Elijah doesn’t have to know. I’m trying to trust you,” Will swallowed. “Trying to show you I’m serious.”

“Elijah won’t be happy if you stop seeing all other clients,” Hannibal murmured, desperate to see the thoughts rolling through Will’s head. “What if he won’t let you work for him anymore?”

“Then I don’t work for him anymore,” Will supplied, trying to seem nonchalant despite the severity of what losing the security Elijah offered meant.

“If we do this, the risk is far greater for you than it is for me. Elijah could let you go, I could stop paying you… what would you do then?”

Will smiled weakly, the suggestion of tears brimming in his eyes as if he were recalling a memory he’d rather not. “Then I go back to being the street whore I was when Elijah found me.”

Hannibal went silent at the confession, the gravity of Will’s pain and the ghosts that haunted him provoking something sharp and severe inside of him. He realised just then how desperate Will must be if he was willing to bank everything he had on Hannibal.

Will took a deep breath. “When I was twenty one, I came to Baltimore. I knew no one, had nothing, and the only way I was able to make any money was turning tricks on the streets. But it was far from easy and I was barely surviving. I took any drugs I could get my hands on, let men abuse me, put myself in situations I would never dream of now, all just to scrape together a few dollars a day. I couldn’t afford to rent my own place, so I sofa-surfed, drifted between half-way houses and braved it on the streets some nights. I did that for three years.”

“What changed?”

“Elijah found me,” Will answered, staring down at his now empty wine glass. “He spotted me in a bar with a john that had more money than sense I’d somehow managed to bag. I’d gotten a feel of how to make wealthier johns interested, keep them coming back. There are a lot of men with a lot of money who like common street whores, like the seediness of it rather than the polished package Elijah’s agency offers. And I’d worked that out, tried my best to earn more money that way, even if it meant getting paid more to do… to do things I would never do now.”

“Elijah saw how you worked your clients.”

“Yes. If he hadn’t spotted me, watched me, seen the potential I had… I’d probably be a body in a dumpster somewhere by now, the rate I was going at. He pulled me off the streets and offered me a job. I fell into it so easily with Elijah, but most importantly I was the safest I’ve ever been. I cleaned myself up.”

“That night I first saw you at the auction, with that client,” Hannibal interjected, “neither of you were sober.”

Will grimaced at him. “If I know my client is going to tip me extra at the end of the night because he gets a kick out of scooping coke up my nose, I’m not going to stop him. I play along with what my client wants, Hannibal. That doesn’t mean I use anymore.”

“I see,” Hannibal murmured gently. “I’m not judging you, Will.”

“I wouldn’t blame you, if you were,” Will exhaled heavily. “I disgust myself sometimes, the lows I’ve stooped to, especially before I met Elijah.”

Hannibal’s warm, broad hand covered his over the top of the table. “I don’t believe there is a single thing about you that is ‘disgusting’, Will.”

Will chewed his lip, cursing the sting of tears in his eyes. They looked at each other for a moment, Hannibal’s hand still gripping Will’s on the table, so warm and strong.

“You’ve never told anyone that story,” Hannibal observed.

“I never had anyone to tell that story to,” Will smiled weakly. “Usually I’m the one that sits there and listens to other people’s woes.”

“There’s more, isn’t there? More that happened to you, even before you came to Baltimore when you were so young.”

Will just gave Hannibal a weary, twisted smile and nodded. “I think I want to go home now. You coming?”

“Yes,” Hannibal whispered within a heartbeat.

They left the restaurant with Hannibal’s arm tightly wrapped around Will’s waist. Will let himself imagine that they were a real couple, just for a moment.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all the love guys <3 I've been so overwhelmed with how well this fic has been received so far, it's put a smile on my face every day and encouraged me to keep churning the chapters out.

More hurt and angst to come, but lots of sweetness too.

I'm Unclean, A Libertine

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Without You I'm Nothing

Hannibal surveyed his surroundings. Will's apartment was virtually barren, devoid of the luxuries and comforts Hannibal filled his own home with. The small apartment opened straight into a narrow hallway, the walls a dreary egg-shell white, not a single piece of art or a photograph hung on the wall. No side table with a bowl for keys or a vase of flowers. Just a hallway, nothing more, nothing less. Will let Hannibal wander from room to room, each as barren as the next.

The kitchen was cramped but sufficient enough, Hannibal supposed. There was just enough counter space to prepare food on, an ancient looking refrigerator and freezer. The kitchen was aged, peeling and rusting despite its cleanliness, not a single thing out of place.

Opposite the kitchen was a living room, a squared off room that bore nothing but a few basics. A fabric sofa that had seen better days, clearly second hand, pushed against the wall. A TV placed on a glass stand at the other end of the room, a dining table that fit the grand total of three chairs around it and a tall, pull string lamp.

At the end of the hall was a bathroom, the dim orange light flickering when turned on. Again, it was spotless, clean, not a thing out of place - the only items in there that indicated Will even lived in the apartment being a toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, a towel hung on a hook and some questionable looking shower gel and shampoo. Hannibal was just pleased he didn't spot a bottle of 2-in-1.

And then Will's bedroom; the only bedroom in the whole apartment. It was roughly the same size as the living room with a bed in the centre of the room against one wall, a single bed-side table next to it bearing a small lamp. Even Will's bed sheets revealed nothing of himself, plain navy blue before him. There was a wardrobe that looked just as second hand as the sofa in the living room and a chest of draws opposite, nestled next to a bookshelf that was surprisingly teeming with books, near overflowing. The only sign of any sort of indulgence Will Graham allowed himself.

Atop of the chest of drawers were boxes stacked on top of each other carefully, precisely. Jewellery boxes, watches, expensive colognes, cufflinks, wallets.

"Gifts from your admirers?" Hannibal murmured, casting his gaze over to Will.

The younger man lingered in the doorway, simply watching Hannibal take in his surroundings.

“Got to look the part, haven’t I?” Will answered quietly, face guarded.

“It’s as if you barely live here,” Hannibal noted, eyes roaming over the bedroom. “No trace of who you really are.”

“That’s the way I prefer it,” Will replied, moving a little closer into the room. “I don’t spend all that much time here.”

Hannibal drifted over to the wardrobe, carefully opening it. Inside was filled with suits and tuxedos, some older than others, some still with the tags on and wrapped in clear plastic zip-up coverings.

“What do you wear on your days off? When you’re not working?”

Will shrugged. “T-shirts. Sweat pants, jeans… what everyone else wears, I guess.”

As Hannibal turned to the book shelf that was overflowing with books, he let a small smile grace his lips. The books were the only sign of Will’s personality, his interests. There were books of all kinds crammed in there, ranging from fly fishing, criminal psychology and classic literature, even a small, battered paperback copy of Chopin sheet music.

Hannibal pulled away a hardback copy of ‘ *Practical Forensic Entomology: Time of Death, Decomposition, and the Insects Used in Death Investigation’* that was tucked right next to Oscar Wilde’s *Salome* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* .

“Quite the collection you have here,” Hannibal mused, pushing back the book he’d just picked up. “Do you play?”

Will’s eyes drifted to where Hannibal’s finger pointed to the worn out copy of Chopin’s sheet music. “I did. I haven’t played in nearly ten years.”

“Who taught you?”

“I did,” Will replied quietly, retreating to his bed and slowly sitting down. “My mother left not long after I was born. I don’t remember her at all, but she left behind a piano in our house and that book. I taught myself very badly. It’s the only thing in this world I’ve ever held on to.”

Hannibal turned, trying to keep the surprise off of his face. “You never knew her?”

“No,” Will answered, shaking his head. “My dad always said I looked like her, though. I used to imagine one day I’d bump into a woman whilst I was walking down the street who had curls just like mine, the same blue in her eyes as me.”

“And what of your father?”

Will said nothing. Hannibal turned back to the bookshelf, noting something poking out from the book on fly-fishing. He pulled it free, his heart sinking at what he found. A small polaroid of Will and a man that must have been his father, at Will’s high school graduation. Will

looked so strange, face free of all the shadows and ghosts that clung to him now. His father bore similar resemblances to Will, but clearly Will did not take after him.

Will's eyes rested on the polaroid. "He doesn't speak to me anymore."

"When did you last speak?" Hannibal queried, thumb stroking over the bright, freckle-specked grin on Will's face.

"When I was nineteen. I left Louisiana and… things changed. He made it very clear that I wasn't his son anymore."

"Will," Hannibal said softly, his heart clenching at the thought.

Will shook his head, lips pressed into a tight line. "I didn't invite you here for pity. It's just the way things are."

Hannibal looked around at the desolate apartment, the faded polaroid and the neatly stacked pile of gifts on the dresser and felt so deeply within himself just how alone Will Graham was. And he knew exactly what that loneliness felt like, because Hannibal had been living with it for nearly all of his life.

He looked at Will, and saw his salvation. No, not just Hannibal's - they would be each *other's* salvation.

Hannibal put the polaroid down and crossed the room to where Will sat on the bed, seeming so small and fragile; Hannibal hated it. He took Will's face in his hands, tilting his head up to stare into those shimmering blue eyes.

"I don't want you to be alone like this ever again, Will," Hannibal found himself confessing, the words aching as they took form. "I despise it. The thought of everything you've lived through, everything you continue to be shackled to… I can't stand the thought of it."

Will raised a hand to grip Hannibal's wrist, his face open and *scared* . "I don't know any other way to live. I've spent so many years trying to stay afloat, one step ahead… I don't know what I'll do anymore."

"Then I'll show you," Hannibal breathed. "You deserve so much more than this, Will. *I* want so much more for you than this."

Will swallowed, tears brimming in his eyes. "You have to understand I find that difficult to believe; I've trusted before and all it's done is hurt me."

"Just give me your time," Hannibal insisted, placing one knee on the bed. "That's all I ask of you. Just time to show you how different things can be if you let me."

"I'll try," Will promised, voice so hushed and tired that it barely sounded like him at all.

Hannibal surged forwards, kissing the escort hungrily. Will pulled him down on top of him, feeling so incredibly safe pinned underneath the weight of Hannibal's body. Hannibal's hands pulled at his shirt so that it became untucked from his trousers, slipping his hands underneath

and savouring the feel of warm skin taught over bones and muscles. Will's own hands tugged at Hannibal's clothes, shedding him of his suit jacket, his waistcoat and tie.

Hannibal smiled at the sensation of Will's tongue pressed against the hollow of his throat, breaking free from their kiss. Will fingered open the buttons on Hannibal's shirt frantically, breath becoming heavy.

"I haven't stopped thinking about you since that night," Will confessed, voice low and breathless against Hannibal's neck. "It's been driving me insane, wanting you like this again."

"You can have it," Hannibal whispered adoringly. "I want to give you everything, Will."

Will groaned. "Don't say things like that."

Hannibal dragged Will's suit trousers off of him followed by his underwear, eyes hungry. *Starving* . "Why not?"

"Because I don't… I don't think you understand the implications of giving me everything," Will panted, frowning.

Hannibal stroked down Will's thighs, fingertips tracing over his knees. Will shed the remainder of Hannibal's clothes, Hannibal letting him, until they were both utterly naked on Will's creaky little bed. Hannibal had never felt so vulnerable or so honoured to see another's vulnerability; for Will to have let him see this part of himself, the staunch loneliness and self-hatred that so clearly existed in every facet and crack of this apartment where Will resided… Hannibal knew not to waste such a precious gift.

"Then tell me," Hannibal encouraged him gently, cradling Will's face in his hands as he knelt before him on the bed. "Tell me the implications of giving you everything, because from where I'm standing, I can't see any reason why I shouldn't. Would you have me suppress my own wants and needs?"

Will gripped Hannibal's tanned, corded forearm , throat bobbing as he swallowed. "There are things about me that scare me. I never let myself love anyone, have *this* … whatever this is, because I know there's a side to myself that will swallow you whole, a part of me that gets so obsessive and hungry..."

Hannibal lent in, brushing his lips over Will's throat, up along his jaw and cheek, over his brow bone. "What makes you think that *I* am any better?"

"You're in control," Will whispered. "I'm not."

"Then I'll control it for both of us until you're ready," Hannibal soothed him, softly kissing Will's forehead. "There's very little I would not do for you, Will. If having you means absorbing the blows, picking apart the lies, facing the darkness from your past, I will do it."

"Why? Why would you do that when we're little more than strangers?"

Hannibal smiled, a deep, ancient thing that stretched across his mouth. “Because I have been *drowning* in the tedium of this life, the agonising politeness of this world for as long as I can remember. I look at you and see my emancipation; you say you’ve crafted a prison of your own making, tethered yourself to a way of life you can’t escape. But Will… so have *I* .”

Will realised then, that Hannibal needed Will just as much as Will needed Hannibal. Except it wasn’t just about *need* . It was about want too, and Hannibal was slowly but surely dismantling that binary, that border, that Will had dug the deep trenches of for so many years.

Perhaps want and need were two sides of the same coin, and Will had wilfully blinded himself to it all this time. And so Will surged forwards, tangling Hannibal into a violent kiss that made his ribcage vibrate with relief.

“I want you,” Will snarled against Hannibal’s mouth. “I want you so much.”

Hannibal said nothing; he let Will push him down onto the bed, let him sink his mouth down onto his hardening cock. Hannibal tipped his head back, sighing, smoothing his fingers through Will’s curls and savouring the feel of Will’s tongue rubbing along his shaft, the hollowing of his cheeks and the delightful suckling motion of his throat. Will’s mouth was so hot, the bobbing of his head as he worked up and down Hannibal’s cock captivating.

A stinging, dark part of Hannibal soured at the thought of so many others using Will’s mouth, of having him like this, and knowing not a single one of them saw Will for what he was. Not a single one of them cherished Will in the way he deserved to be, and Hannibal *knew* he’d never been cared for properly. If he had, Will would not still be escorting. He would be safe and treasured and content, not selling himself week after week if he didn’t want to. Hannibal didn’t doubt that others had seen Will as a damsel in distress, wanting to be his knight in shining armour and whisk him away from a life of selling his time, selling his body. But if anyone had truly been deserving of Will, they would have pulled him out, revered him for the rest of time. It was other people’s selfishness that kept Will pinned in place.

“What are you thinking about?” Will whispered, kissing Hannibal’s hip bone, stroking Hannibal’s cock.

Hannibal blinked. “What makes you ask that?”

Will smiled. “I can tell when someone is distracted, even when their cock is in my mouth.”

Hannibal winced internally, but decided to be honest. “I was thinking that everyone else that’s ever had the privilege of having you couldn’t fathom how special you are.”

Will *blushed* , red flaring across his cheeks in the most beautiful display of humility Hannibal had seen. “I don’t want you to be distracted thinking about the other people I’ve slept with. Focus on me.”

“I’m sorry,” Hannibal apologised sincerely, pulling Will into his lap. “I find myself repeatedly overwhelmed with how consuming my thoughts of you are.”

“God, you’re insufferable,” Will laughed softly into Hannibal’s chest, grinning.

Hannibal smiled back lazily, observing the way Will’s skin stretched as he reached over to the bedside table and yanked open the drawer. He retrieved a bottle of lube that looked as if it had never been opened, ignoring Hannibal’s gaze as he wasted no time in flipping open the cap and squeezing a generous amount onto his fingers. Hannibal’s mouth parted in awe as Will reached around behind himself, his fingers disappearing.

Hannibal skimmed his palms over Will’s sides where the younger man knelt between his own legs, head tilted upwards to watch Will in fascination as he worked himself open on his own fingers. He catalogued every twitch of Will’s brows, the bite of his lip, the hitch of breath as he stretched himself.

“You’re so beautiful, Will,” Hannibal breathed in amazement, head falling forwards to kiss along Will’s collar bones, his sternum.

“Touch me,” Will groaned, the obscene sounds of squelching from behind him making Hannibal’s cock twitch.

Hannibal obliged straight away, one arm wrapping around Will’s deliciously narrow waist, his other hand caressing Will’s half-hard cock between his legs. Will moaned at the warmth and grip around his cock, watching through glazed over eyes as Hannibal suddenly released him to squeeze a dollop of lube into the palm of his hand. Will gasped when Hannibal’s lube coated hand snaked back around his cock, stroking him fervently.

“That feels so…,” Will groaned, trailing off.

“Tell me,” Hannibal insisted, mouthing at one of Will’s nipples.

“Overwhelming,” Will whined, slipping a third finger into himself. “Like my insides are turning molten.”

“ *Will* ,” Hannibal moaned, scraping his teeth over Will’s delightfully flushed chest. “Lovely boy.”

Hannibal couldn’t help himself from reaching around behind Will with the hand that wasn’t stroking the younger man. His fingertips floated down Will’s spine with a feather light touch, over each vertebrae, until they bumped into Will’s fingers, working himself open. Will froze momentarily but then relaxed as Hannibal’s fingers rubbed around his rim, his other hand still wetly sliding up and down his cock.

Will withdrew one of his fingers, and Hannibal took the invitation to slip in one of his own inside of the escort, satisfaction licking along Hannibal’s bones at the feel of his finger brushing against Will’s inside of him.

Hannibal clamped his teeth down over Will’s collarbone as he plunged another finger inside, relishing the startled jolt and gasp it elicited from Will. Their fingers stretched him open in a joint effort, Hannibal’s thumb rubbing along his rim and perineum, condensation beginning to form on the window of Will’s barren bedroom.

Will's head was spinning from the sensation of four fingers stretching him open, curling inside of him, sinking in to the knuckle whilst Hannibal jerked him off with such reverence and dedication. Will let it continue until he felt his release begin to creep up on him, his legs trembling where he knelt between Hannibal's legs.

Hannibal took the hint when Will withdrew his own fingers, pressed down on Hannibal's chest to push him down into the mattress. He held Will by the waist as the younger man straddled Hannibal, reaching behind him to grasp Hannibal's cock and rub it along the cleft of his ass, hips undulating back and forth teasingly.

Hannibal bit down on a feral snarl that was bubbling in his throat at the sensation, more than content to simply watch Will grinding and rocking against his cock above him. He hadn't stopped thinking about what it had been like to be beneath Will since that night, how remarkable it had been to witness Will riding his cock.

Hannibal gritted his teeth, startled as Will fed his cock into his slick, stretched hole. "Will - we need to use - "

"Don't care," Will hissed, shuddering at the intrusion of Hannibal's cock easing into him. "Want to feel you properly."

"But - "

Will wrapped a hand around Hannibal's throat and pinned him back down to the bed, eyes burning with a wildness that made Hannibal's heart skip a beat. "I said, I don't care."

Groaning, Hannibal simply nodded, letting Will circle his hips and grind down against his cock as he sheathed himself fully inside of the younger man. Hannibal wasn't one to look a gift horse in the mouth; if Will wanted to fuck bareback, Hannibal was greedily going to accept. He'd been dying to fuck Will raw.

Will was torturing him, his movements slow and lazy as he simply rocked on Hannibal's cock, a sly grin spread across his mouth. Hannibal began to sweat, fingers digging into Will's flesh, hips twitching upwards. Being inside of Will like this for the first time was agonisingly sweet.

"Wait," Will whispered, the tone of his voice sinful. "Want to see how long you can stand it."

"Wicked boy," Hannibal cursed him, groaning as he slumped back into the bed.

"Just let me… let me have this," Will spoke softly. "Can feel you so *deep* inside of me, Hannibal."

Will lifted one of Hannibal's hands to his flat stomach, between Will's belly button and the thatch of dark pubic hair that sat below. Hannibal nearly choked as he felt the gentle *nudge* of his own cock from within Will as he rocked back and forth over Hannibal's member. Hannibal's balls tightened at the sensation.

He couldn't stand it any longer.

With a snarl, he surged forwards and pulled Will off of his cock, flipping him over by the hips so Will was face down on the bed. He fell forwards onto his elbows, kneeling to present his ass to Hannibal, who crouched behind him and stuffed his cock back into Will's glistening hole.

" *Yes* ," Will choked out, grinning ferally as Hannibal's cock penetrated him in a rushed motion. "Fucking *yes* ."

Hannibal gripped Will's hips so hard Will knew he'd bruise, but the thought of it sent a thrill through Will. Hannibal didn't wait for Will to adjust again, setting a punishing pace as he began to fuck him.

"Do you think you're so clever, darling? Getting me worked up like that so I can fuck you even harder?" Hannibal growled above Will.

"You like it," Will laughed brokenly into the bed, chest heaving. " *I* like it, seeing your self control snap."

Hannibal wanted to fuck Will into unconsciousness for his attitude, his daring, finding it so mouth-watering but infuriating at the same time. He wanted Will to beg for Hannibal to stop, to moan and sob at the oversensitivity Hannibal would punish him with for his boldness, but he was also so amused at how well Will knew how to draw that untamed side of Hannibal out.

"You can't stop yourself from playing games, can you?" Hannibal observed, grunting as he snapped his hips forwards at a particularly brutal force, sending Will jolting forwards on the bed.

If Will wanted to taunt Hannibal into dominating him, he'd give the sweet thing what he wanted.

The slap of skin meeting, the headboard of the bed rattling against the wall, Will's choked, breathless moans spilling into the air… Hannibal wanted to drown in it. Wanted to drown in Will. He held Will in place as each thrust of his hips sent Will jerking up the bed away from him, barely registering the near savage grunts and groans that poured from his own mouth.

"Taking it so well for me, Will," Hannibal praised him, mind clouded over with lust. "You needed to be fucked like this, didn't you?"

Will nodded feebly, unable to keep his eyes open, face contorting with pleasure. "I did, I did… thank you, D… Hannibal."

Will caught himself before the word could tumble past his lips. He was too far gone, his head a fuzzy mess, nearly letting slip the word he'd been so ashamed of wanting to say. The word he'd said so many times, in so many porno shoots and with so many clients, that it had made him mortified of the fact he secretly, deep down, felt thrills go through him at the thought of calling Hannibal *that* .

Hannibal slowed to a stop - of course he hadn't missed it. "Say what you were going to say, Will."

"I wasn't going to say anything," Will insisted, shuddering as Hannibal's fingernails pressed into the flesh of his hips.

Hannibal stretched himself out over Will's back, pressing his cock in deeper, to graze his mouth over Will's left ear. "Don't lie to me. Honesty, always, Will."

A lump formed in Will's throat and he shook his head. "I wasn't - "

Fingers curled around his cock in a tight grip, slowly stroking him. "Tell me."

"I… I was going to say thank you…," Will trailed off, tears brimming in his eyes.

"Thank you, what?"

"Thank you, Daddy," Will whispered, scrunching his eyes shut in shame.

The room fell silent, and then all of a sudden Hannibal's warm, broad hand pinned Will by the back of the neck to the bed like a snake darting forwards and sinking its fangs into flesh, his hips beginning to smack against the tops of Will's thighs and ass again. Will saw stars.

"Just when I thought you couldn't be any more perfect," Hannibal cooed at him, sheer wonder in his voice. "Perfect, lovely boy. I should have known, shouldn't I, darling? Should have worked it out when you told me you like being called a good boy."

"Hannibal," Will gasped, mewling.

"Don't call me that," Hannibal corrected him, thrusting relentlessly into Will. "What do you call me, sweet boy?"

"D-addy," Will choked out, the feeling of Hannibal's cock pounding against his prostate making him squirm.

"That's right," Hannibal praised him, exhaling airily. "You're being so good and brave for Daddy."

"Oh, *fuck* ," Will sobbed into the bed sheets, toes curling. "I'm gonna - "

"Not yet," Hannibal refused, squeezing Will's cock at the base, ceasing to stroke him. "Just a little longer, Will."

" *Please* ," Will rasped, turning his head to the side, Hannibal's hand still pinning him by the neck.

"I know, sweet thing," Hannibal soothed him. "I know it's not easy. It hurts, doesn't it?"

Hannibal was going to break him; it was too good, *too much* . Hannibal's cock was gliding in and out of him, pressing down on his prostate with every thrust, and the filthy tone of voice

and bittersweet words that were coming from his mouth alone were enough to make Will crumble. Will had only ever fantasised about this, about being worshipped like this, held down and fucked into sweet oblivion, his skin crawling for release but unable to orgasm because Daddy controlled when he came and -

“You’re so close, aren’t you?” Hannibal murmured softly, panting. “I can feel it, feel how you’re getting tighter and tighter around Daddy’s cock. You’re doing so well.”

“I need to cum, I can’t - I can’t - ”

Hannibal kept pounding into him, ignoring his pleas. He stroked Will cruelly, hand moving quickly up and down Will’s shaft in a flash of movement that made Will choke, his spine arching and then - then he stopped out of nowhere, back to clasping his hand tightly around the base of Will’s cock.

“Please don’t,” Will sobbed. “I can’t do it, I…”

“But you can,” Hannibal whispered, the hand around the back of Will’s neck tightening. “You’re being a very good boy for me. This is how you’ll come, Will, or not at all.”

“ *God* , please just let me - ”

That hand stroked him at a relentless pace again and Will sucked in a breath of air as if he was drowning, eyes rolling back in his head, stomach clenching, the burn building and building… until it vanished again, Hannibal’s hand back in that vice-like grip at his base.

Words evaded Will then, and Hannibal took him apart piece by piece, edging him mercilessly. He fucked Will ruthlessly, bruising his prostate with each snap of his haps, worked his cock in wicked, short bursts to the point where Will was close to exploding, then squeezing his cock viciously to stop him from coming. Hannibal could see Will had stopped thinking, merely only feeling now, drooling and sobbing into the bed. His face was flushed, eyes rolling in his head, pliant and shaking beneath Hannibal.

“Daddy’s going to let you come now,” Hannibal softly hushed him, stroking a thumb over Will’s cheekbone.

Will gurgled out a word that vaguely sounded like ‘thank you’, and Hannibal grinned. Oh, he was delicious. Addictive.

Hannibal hauled Will up from where he’d been leaning forwards on his elbows, keeping him upright with a hand splayed across his chest. He clasped Will’s cock one last time, groaning at the way it throbbed in his hand and began to fondle him carefully, smooth, gentle tugs of his cock.

Will *wailed* , going still in Hannibal’s arms as he came. His breath caught in his throat and he felt as if a part of his soul had left his body as hot, pearly cum shot from his cock, coating Hannibal’s hand and the bed.

“Perfect, beautiful thing,” Hannibal groaned in his ear, his own release slowly approaching. “Such a good boy for me, aren’t you?”

“Yes Daddy,” Will cried, going limp against Hannibal.

Hannibal eased him back down to the bed and held his hips up again, picking the pace back up. “Keep squeezing around Daddy’s cock, Will. Make Daddy cum.”

Will writhed beneath him, desperately trying to obey. His inner walls clenched around Hannibal’s cock so sweetly, warm and slick with lube and pre-cum. The sight of Will struggling so beautifully to do as Hannibal had asked, despite being so strung out, brought Hannibal right up to edge.

Will captured Hannibal’s index and middle finger in his slack, open mouth where Hannibal’s hand was planted on the bed next to Will’s head and wrapped his tongue around them, sucking obscenely. Hannibal gasped at the sight, the feel of Will’s tongue, and felt his orgasm rip through him.

He stilled, mouth hanging open in a silent shout, shuddering as wave after wave tore him apart and he coated Will’s insides with his release. Will whimpered at the hot, thick substance he could feel erupt inside of him from Hannibal’s cock, shivering at the way he could *feel* Hannibal’s cock pulsate inside of him with each spurt of cum that he released.

Hannibal slowly eased himself back down to lay on the bed, pulling Will close to him so they spooned, still inside of the escort as his cock began to soften.

They both found themselves speechless, for the first time in a very long time.

Day's Dawning, Skin's Crawling

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Pure Morning

“Are you aware you talk in your sleep?”

Will pulled the sheets tighter around himself, burying further into the nest of pillows and comforter. He opened one groggy, tired eye and stared at Hannibal. “Yes.”

Hannibal’s lips quirked upwards in amusement. “You were giving a rather impressive monologue about the ridiculousness of gondolas and canals in Las Vegas imitating those in Venice.”

Will turned his face away so Hannibal didn’t see his face go ashen at the mention of Las Vegas, merely grunting.

“I have to say I agree with you,” Hannibal mused, trailing a fingertip over the bare strip of Will’s shoulder that was sticking out from his den.

“Hannibal,” Will sighed, exasperated. “Are you always this fucking *chipper* in the mornings? What time is it even?”

A bemused chuckle drifted towards Will from Hannibal’s side of the bed - no, not Hannibal’s side of the bed. Will’s bed. The whole thing was Will’s. Hannibal didn’t have a *side* . Will cursed himself internally.

“I’m an early riser,” Hannibal offered, fingers still tracing featherlight patterns over Will’s exposed skin. “I apologise. Shall I stop talking and let you go back to sleep?”

“No,” Will grumbled. “I’m awake now.”

Lips brushed over his bare shoulder. “Who knew this level of hostility could be so endearing in the morning?”

Will turned his head to face Hannibal again, glaring. “I will kick you out. Don’t think I won’t.”

Hannibal looked glorious in the dim morning lights of Will’s bedroom. The winter sun was barely risen, straining through the gaps in Will’s threadbare curtains and casting Hannibal in ashen sunlight that would have made anyone else look muggy and dull. Hannibal seemed to appear like water, like a rippling reflection in a dim pool of dying starlight.

Jesus fuck, Will had it bad.

“I have no doubts about that whatsoever,” Hannibal assured him. “Go back to sleep, if you wish.”

“Can’t,” Will grunted, finally sitting upright and stretching his naked limbs out, wincing at the ache. “I can never fall back asleep once I’ve woken up. How long have you been awake?”

A pause.

“A while.”

Will narrowed his eyes at Hannibal. “Been watching me sleep, Doctor Lecter?”

Hannibal smiled like a child who’d been caught doing something they knew full well they shouldn’t have been doing, but knew there would be no reprimand. “Perhaps. You’re awfully interesting to watch.”

“Creep,” Will mumbled.

He rose from bed, not bothering to tug any clothes on as he headed for the door; Hannibal had seen it all by now anyway. Will had absolutely no shame or embarrassment left about nudity or being naked at this point in his life; he’d spent far too much time with no clothes on to give a shit anymore.

But that didn’t stop the prickling at the back of his neck as he felt Hannibal’s eyes hungrily watching him leave the bedroom and head to the bathroom, as if he was being observed by a predator.

Hannibal made sure he was careful not to mention the name that had tumbled past Will’s lips repeatedly during the night, amongst his talk over gondolas and canals and Las Vegas. Who Matthew was, Hannibal did not know, but every part of him screamed out with the *need* to know. Was he a friend? Was he a lover? Someone who had wronged Will?

Hannibal’s skin began to itch with the desperation to know. There was nothing in Will’s apartment for Hannibal to pilfer through, nothing for him to steal or rifle about in order to try and discern who Matthew was. No, the only personal things in this miserable little apartment were the battered paperback of Chopin sheet music and a faded polaroid. Will kept very little of himself in this place, as if he was afraid to. As if he was paranoid that any sort of attachment of himself to this apartment could be disastrous to him.

Will returned. Hannibal pulled him greedily back into bed, tucking the younger man against his chest.

Will’s hand drifted to Hannibal’s stomach, floating downwards until he reached between his legs. Hannibal watched in amusement as Will frowned.

“Oh… you don’t want…,” Will trailed off, blush spreading across his cheeks.

“I don’t want what, Will?”

“I thought you wanted to fuck me again.”

“Because I’m holding you?”

Will nodded, seeming to wince at himself.

Something inside of Hannibal ached at the realisation that Will automatically assumed Hannibal wanted sex again, not to just simply hold him.

“Will,” Hannibal sighed into the younger man’s curls, which were a delightful mix of Will’s own scent, but also of Hannibal’s cologne. “No, darling. I simply wanted to hold you, if that’s alright.”

“Sorry,” Will whispered.

“Don’t apologise,” Hannibal insisted. “Never apologise. Not with me.”

“I thought you would be gone when I woke up.”

“Because you wanted me to be gone, or because you didn’t believe I wanted to spend the whole night?”

Will snorted against Hannibal’s chest, curling his arms around Hannibal’s broad, muscled shoulders. “This place is hardly the Ritz.”

“But it’s yours,” Hannibal said softly. “And that is infinitely more special than any other place I could think of.”

Will pinched him playfully, but grinned into Hannibal’s throat. “You make it sound as if I hung the moon.”

“Perhaps you did.”

“I most certainly did *not,”* Will chuckled. “Thank you, for still being here this morning.”

If simply spending the night after they’d had sex was enough to make Will this bashful and thankful, Hannibal’s toes curled at the thought of what else he could do to show his devotion, his appreciation.

“You have absolutely no idea how enchanting you are,” Hannibal groaned, holding Will tighter. “God, I want to spoil you. Shower you with everything I possibly can.”

Will poked him in the ribs. “Don’t be ridiculous.”

“I don’t care if it’s ridiculous,” Hannibal grinned. “I want you to know how delightful you are. I want to take care of you, Will.”

A shudder ran through Will at that. “Maybe I do like the sound of that.”

Hannibal tilted Will's head so their eyes could meet. "You want to be taken care of, don't you? Want somebody else, somebody capable, to take all those burdens away that you shoulder and let you be at peace."

"Yes," Will whispered in a tiny, cautious voice. "I want that but… I don't know how deserving of that I am."

"You are fully deserving of it," Hannibal insisted. "And I would give it to you, Will, if you let me. I *want* to. Last night… it didn't just fulfil your desires when that dynamic began to play out."

Will squirmed in his arms, face twisting. Hannibal refused to let him look away.

"You weren't just… going along with it?" Will asked carefully.

"No, Will. It's something I enjoyed just as much as you did."

"I've called so many men that… word before," Will confessed. "And I never… it's never been like *that* . It's always been something other people have wanted me to say, and I've never been able to be with anyone where I can fall into that dynamic. I've spent so long feeling ashamed and disgusted that it's something that turns me on, but it's something I wanted during sex, as long as it was with the right person."

"For someone who is so well versed in the workings of human sexuality," Hannibal smiled fondly, "you seem to keep your own sexuality at arms length with great resolve."

"I have to. Have to… separate. Compartmentalise. Tell myself I'm virtually sexless, asexual, at times."

"I understand," Hannibal soothed him, admiring the curl of Will's lower lip. "I don't want you to do that with me though, Will."

Will smiled wearily. "I don't seem to be able to. Every time we've slept together it's like I've lost my mind. Like you dragged me under and all I can do is *feel* . Want. Give myself over to that pleasure. It's never been like that with anybody before."

"Good," Hannibal nearly purred. "I hope you recognise that I don't just get off on being called Daddy in bed. It extends further than that."

And Will, Will Graham who had heard and seen it all, *blushed* . "I… yeah. I do, from the glimpses I've seen."

"It's not just about what you call me when I fuck you, Will," Hannibal carried on, incredibly pleased at how flustered he'd made Will, "It's about taking care of all of your needs. Emotionally, physically, mentally - "

"Well you're certainly not getting me into your office for a therapy session," Will interrupted with a snort.

Hannibal rolled his eyes but smiled. "I wouldn't dare."

“It’s not something I ever let myself explore properly before,” Will confessed. “Everything I’ve done has made it seem so wrong. But you…”

Satisfaction unfurled within Hannibal, unapologetically smug at the fact that out of all the men Will had been with, none of them had elicited that dynamic genuinely from Will, none of them had been the right person for those desires to come to life for the escort. And Hannibal was enthralled with how deliciously *right* it had felt to hear the word *Daddy* falling from Will’s lips in a pleasure-drenched moan, enthralled with all the other things he longed to do for Will in order to take care of him.

Hannibal watched as Will swallowed, eyes flitting around the room anxiously.

“You make me feel things I haven't felt before,” Will admitted carefully. “Not just during sex. But the sex is… special. You make me nervous, Hannibal.”

“Nervous?”

“It’s a lot,” Will admitted. “I want things from you I’ve never wanted before, things I’ve never had. I’ve never had a date where I wasn’t paid to be there. Never complimented someone and really, truly meant it. I’ve never had a partner, a relationship before. And I know when I first met you, I said I didn’t do all of those things because they’re too messy. You make me not care about those complications.”

Hannibal kissed him softly, tenderly. “We can take it slowly. I appreciate there’s a lot of things you’ll need time to adjust to.”

Will bit his lip. “I’ll try and be as honest as I can with you. Give you my time, like you asked. But you need to be patient with me, too. Honest.”

“I will,” Hannibal swore. “I’ll give you whatever you need, Will.”

“Do you think we’re idiots?” Will asked suddenly, seeming to tense in Hannibal’s arms. “Idiots who are too blinded to see that this isn’t a good idea?”

“Will - ”

“I’m a whore, Hannibal. Elijah can dress it up in as many frilly layers as he wants, call it an escort agency, but I work for him as a whore. That’s what I was before I met him and it’s what I still am now. I have nothing to offer you, nothing of value. And you - you’re from an entirely different world to me. You have dignity and respect and the whole world at your feet if you wished for it. I don’t want to sully that. Taint your image.”

“Is that what you’re worried about?” Hannibal asked slowly. “How others will perceive me if they know how you earn a living?”

Will’s eyes darkened. “The idea of dragging you down to my level makes me feel sick. You’re so refined and polished. What are you going to do when you want to take me to the opera, and half of the people there will take one look at me and know you’ve shown up with an escort?”

“Nothing,” Hannibal replied bluntly. “I’d let them stare, let them whisper. What does it matter to me?”

“You have a reputation. An image.”

“I don’t care for that image if it stands as a barrier between you and I.”

Will sucked in a sharp breath. “You say that now.”

“You think I’d tire of you? Think I’d cave in to the peer pressure of the so-called scandal they would believe our relationship to be?”

“Yes,” Will grumbled, shifting away from Hannibal and out of his arms.

Hannibal let him go. No good came of trying to hold down flighty creatures like Will. Hannibal had to remain still, let Will come to him when he was ready.

“The only way I can prove to you that I wouldn’t is over time, Will,” Hannibal sighed. “It doesn’t matter how it looks, what other people say. None of that is as important as how you make me feel, what you mean to me. All the things I’ve still to do with you, learn about you, discover *with* you… all of that is far more crucial than the opinions of those who like to spread vapid, meaningless gossip.”

Will’s eyes were angry, sharp, and watery when he looked back at Hannibal. “Why do you even *want* me, Hannibal? So what if I can hold my own when it comes to picking apart each other's minds? I’m sure you have plenty of others ready and willing to do that with you, someone sophisticated like Alana Bloom.”

Hannibal gritted his teeth. “There is no one quite like you, Will.”

“You fucked Alana, didn’t you?” Will sniped suddenly, drawing further away from Hannibal on the bed.

“We have a shared past, yes. I won’t be dishonest about it.”

“I knew it,” Will scoffed. “Was she too vanilla for you? Did you decide you needed something with a little bit more seediness to spice up your sex life, someone like *me* ?”

“Don’t debase yourself just because you don’t know how to wield your jealousy,” Hannibal said coldly. “If you’re jealous of the fact I slept with Alana, just say so.”

Will’s eyes gleamed with dark intent. “And what if I am jealous?”

“You’re allowed to be so. I certainly am no better,” Hannibal sighed heavily. “I dislike the thought of everyone else who has had you, Will. Particularly Frederick Chilton. But we all have our pasts, and there is no way of erasing who we’ve shared a bed with before we met each other.”

Will knew he was self-sabotaging. Knew he was flinging himself back and forth between being soft and vulnerable and admitting things to Hannibal that were so tender it hurt to put

into words, so shimmeringly hopeful at the prospect of what the future held for Will with Hannibal. But that dark, hateful part of him that had been so tightly wound and sharply honed to always attack, to dissemble and *ruin* things could not be stopped. Will was unable to turn it off, to lower the walls around himself and lay down that defence mechanism that was so cliché it made him sick.

*Push him away so he doesn't want you. Hurt him so he thinks you're the disgusting, lowly thing that **you** know you are. Then when he leaves, when he gets tired, it won't hurt as much. Damage control.*

Will was so overwhelmed in the cold light of the winter morning how *terrified* of this situation with Hannibal he was. He wanted to crawl inside of the other's man's chest, nestle his bones against Hannibal's and never leave. He wanted to fall in love with this man who, really, he did not know very much about. He wanted to fall asleep in his arms every night and wake up to see his face first thing in the morning. He wanted devotion, given and taken in equal turns, and he wanted Hannibal to take care of him. Wanted to be Hannibal's salvation, as the older man had told him last night. But Will had never even been close to any of those things before, and the fear of letting Hannibal down, of failing him, was intolerable. The realisation that Hannibal was far, far too good for Will had rained down on him like a sack of bricks this morning, despite how safe and wanted he felt with the doctor - despite the fact he felt like he'd found everything he wanted and needed in Hannibal Lecter.

"Shared a bed with?" Will scoffed. "You make it sound so romantic, Hannibal. It's *different* for you; you've waltzed your way through life having lovers and affairs and it's all worked out *fine* for you."

"If you want to lash out at me, Will, that's alright," Hannibal told him, voice low. "I know this is difficult for you. We're on tenuous, new grounds. Perhaps we could try and establish - "

"Stop," Will cut him off. "Don't patronise me."

"Have I done something wrong, Will? I'm merely trying to discern where we go from here, seeing as we are both quite clearly standing at an impasse. There is something undeniable between us - don't you want to nurture that, see how it flourishes?"

"Just for you to dump me back where you found me after you get bored?" Will smiled bitterly.

"Last night you said you were willing to stop seeing other clients, even if it meant Elijah didn't want you to work for him anymore," Hannibal reminded him, jaw tightening. "You were willing to take that risk last night, because you felt so strongly you wanted to pursue this between us. I'm not going to *use* you, take you for a ride and then wash my hands of you when I'm done. What can I do to prove that to you?"

For the first time in years, Will Graham let the tears brimming in his eyes fall, salty drops rolling down his cheeks. "You can't, Hannibal. You can't prove that. I'm too damaged to be able to believe that."

“You are not damaged,” Hannibal growled, infuriated at the idea Will would see himself in that light. “You’ve built walls so high and hidden away your trust because you had to. That is *not* the same thing as being damaged.”

“You don’t know the first thing about that,” Will whispered, something snapping and breaking inside of him.

“Then let me know, let me learn,” Hannibal pleaded. “Nothing you could reveal would push me away, Will, change my mind about you.”

Will grimaced through the tears that clouded his vision. All of that resolve, that determination that Will could begin something with Hannibal, follow his heart… he recoiled from it, knowing he’d wanted it in part because he knew if he was good enough, sweet enough, *usable* enough for Hannibal, Hannibal could pull him out of the grave he’d dug himself. Hannibal had the means to end Will’s predicament, the money to pay back Jack Crawford in the blink of an eye. Will had wanted to use Hannibal to save Matthew.

And now, sat opposite Hannibal in his worn out, squeaky little bed, Will knew he couldn’t go through with it. Will couldn’t use Hannibal like that, because Hannibal was the only person Will would ever feel like this for. And Will would never forgive himself for soiling and dirtying such a precious, rare thing, like he had done with everything else in his life. Hannibal, who was so warm and strong and who *saw Will* . How could Will ever possibly corrupt that? Ruin the beautiful potential he saw in this man, who was still here right now, still fighting for Will, despite the fact Will was being so unkind and subversive?

So what if Will was tired? So what if Will finally wanted something good for himself, to leave behind this life of selling himself? None of that mattered when Matthew’s life still dangled so precariously in Will’s hands because of all the careless, impulsive decisions Will had made, his debt still owed to Jack.

Matthew, who had only ever cared for Will, looked out for him. Will couldn’t do that to him, betray him in such a manner when Jack Crawford could so easily place Matthew in so much danger. Will doubted Matthew was even still with Crawford after all this time, but Jack’s rage was not something to be trifled with. Will wouldn’t dare risk missing a single payment each month, not when he knew full well Jack could track Matthew down, even if he wasn’t in L.A. anymore.

Jack had done it to Will when he’d fled to Vegas - he’d do it to Matthew too if Will broke his promise. Drag him to that awful, hateful room to be ripped apart for some twisted, vile snuff film.

Will looked at Hannibal, and knew he had to hurt him. Knew he had to push him away so the break was clean, avoid all of the awful mess and splinters he’d suffer from dragging himself away from Hannibal if he let his feelings grow anymore.

“There are so many things about me that you don’t know. So many things that you *should* be disgusted by, things that will make you want to walk away,” Will told him flatly, the tears stinging on his cheeks where they were drying.

Hannibal reached for him, and Will let him, because he was weak. Pathetic. He turned his cheek into the warm palm that cupped him, fighting the bout of tears that threatened to spring forth.

“Oh Will,” Hannibal sighed. “I can feel how hurt you are, darling. So wounded and I despise it. Let me in, and I promise I’ll help. There’s nothing you should be ashamed of. Nothing that will change how I see you.”

Will closed his eyes, savouring that warmth against his cheek from the doctor’s hand. It may be the last time he felt such tenderness - no, it *would* be. It had to be.

“I think you should leave,” Will murmured, that terrible snapping, splitting sensation flaring in his chest again. “I was wrong about you. About myself, and what I’m capable of.”

“You think I’ll leave just because you’re scared of your feelings?” Hannibal muttered, gripping Will’s bare knee with his other hand.

Will wanted to moan, to throw himself into that warm touch, barrel Hannibal down onto the bed again. Why wouldn’t the doctor just tire of him, become repulsed by Will’s carelessness and bitterness?

“I think you’ll leave because you’ll do what I want,” Will bit back, eyes opening and forcing himself to wrench his cheek away from Hannibal’s touch. “I want you to go.”

“No, you don’t,” Hannibal rebutted, eyes hardening. “You really, truly don’t.”

“I made a mistake,” Will scoffed. “I can’t trust you. Can’t believe you can offer me the security I need. I’m better off as I am now. It’ll be better for both of us, Hannibal. I’ll get to keep my income and you’ll get to keep your reputation. I can’t, *won’t* , leave this life for you.”

Hannibal knew the words were designed so carefully, so precisely crafted to hurt him. And they did; they wounded him in a way he’d never felt before. He felt his stomach drop at the suggestion he wasn’t enough for Will, that Will was better off without him.

But he buckled down. “You’ll have to do better than that, Will. If you think you’ll push me away with hurtful words, you won’t. I just want to understand what it is you’re so afraid of, why you’re retreating from what you said last night.”

“I don’t have to explain myself to you,” Will snapped.

Will stood, making his way over to the dresser and yanking open drawers. He pulled out a faded old t-shirt and pair of sweatpants, dressing hastily. He ignored Hannibal’s watchful eyes from his bed, stooping down to snatch up the doctor’s clothes.

The first time anyone else had ever been inside of his apartment, seen him for the lonely, wretched thing he was, and here Will was throwing Hannibal out with not an ounce of the respect and dignity the older man deserved.

Will threw Hannibal’s clothes at him on the bed, glowering. “I meant it. Get out.”

Hannibal caught them, reflexes surprising Will somewhat. His face had gone stony.

“Alright, Will.”

“Don’t call Elijah again,” Will forced himself to say, his insides turning. “Don’t ask for me. Don’t come within a mile of this apartment.”

Hannibal dressed himself silently, refusing to look at Will. When he was done, he walked up to Will until they were inches apart, and Hannibal’s eyes bore holes into Will’s face. Will wanted to wither, to fall to his knees and apologise. To tell Hannibal he hadn’t meant a word of it and all he wanted was for Hannibal to get back into bed with him and hold him again. Take care of him.

No. Those things aren’t for you.

“Get out of - ”

“Who is Matthew?” Hannibal cut him off, eyes hard like flint.

Will reeled back, unable to stop the horrified twist of his face at Hannibal’s question.

“You said his name, nearly every time you spoke in your sleep last night,” Hannibal bit the words out, cruelly. “Who is he?”

“It’s none of your business,” Will hissed, stepping back from Hannibal as if he’d been stung.

Hannibal’s lip curled. “Is he the one who hurt you?”

“It’s nothing to do with you!” Will yelled, eyes wide and fists trembling at his sides. “Keep the fuck out of it, Hannibal. It’s time for you to leave.”

Hannibal scoffed. “I hope he’s worth it, whoever he is. He must be special if you’re willing to crucify yourself like this for him.”

“Don’t talk about things you know nothing about,” Will seethed, baring his teeth. “I don’t want you here anymore. I don’t want to see you again. This whole thing was a laughable mistake.”

“I know nothing about it because you refuse to tell me,” Hannibal countered. “I’m not going to stop wanting you, Will. I want you to know I’ll be there, ready and waiting, when you’re ready to talk. We’re not walking away from this; we can’t.”

Before Will could breathe life into another nasty, sharp retort he didn’t mean, Hannibal turned and left. Will stood stock-still, not even blinking, holding his breath until he heard the sound of Hannibal’s footsteps reach the front door and the noises of the doctor leaving.

The door opened, closed. Will waited. Let out the breath he held. His hand grabbed on to the dresser beside him, the other flying to his face to cover his mouth as the cry-scream ripped from his lungs. Tears burst like a dam in his eyes, and Will began to sob.

His shoulders shook with the force of those sobs, sobs which he still refused to give any sound to, hand clasped over his mouth to muffle them.

Here he was again; alone. Just like he always had been. Like he deserved to be. The barren walls of his bedroom seemed to drift away from him, the floor stretching out beneath him as he broke his own heart. Hannibal Lecter had been the only good thing Will would ever have had the chance to experience.

Stumbling to his bed, Will sank back into the sheets, recoiling at the realisation they smelt like Hannibal. Of their combined sweat, dried cum and fading cologne. Will felt sick.

And then he saw it - on his bedside table, resting there next to the lamp. Will held it aloft to the light, realising what he was holding. Hannibal's business card, with what was presumably his work number. But there, carefully penned as if Hannibal had lovingly brought each number to life, was a different number in the top corner of the card. Hannibal's own private number. Will saw the pen that Hannibal had fished out of his bedside drawer laid behind the lamp. Hannibal must have written it when Will was still asleep, as if he'd somehow predicted Will would try to throw him out in the morning with no way of contacting him again.

I want you to know I'll be there, ready and waiting, when you're ready to talk. We're not walking away from this; we can't.

You'd Better Keep It In Check, Or You'll End Up A Wreck

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Narcoleptic

Hours had turned to days. Days had turned into weeks. And weeks had slowly morphed into months.

Every day, Hannibal waited for his cell phone to ring with an unknown number. Stared at his work phone, wondering if there would be a call on that number. He even scoured through his emails and junk folder in the foolish hope the email address on the business card he'd left in Will's bedroom was a possibility.

There was nothing, of course. Nothing but silence for two whole months. Will had gone from appearing at nearly every social outing that Hannibal attended to having vanished into thin air, nothing more than a ghost.

Christmas had been and gone. Hannibal spent it alone, wondering the entire time whether Will was alone too. Was he in his bleak apartment, bundled into bed with one of his many books, the polaroid of him and his father pointedly placed face down on the book shelf? Or had he spent Christmas day in someone else's bed, smiling prettily at them and filling the gaps of some other bastard's loneliness? The thought of it nauseated Hannibal.

January slithered around, bringing with it snow. Hannibal wondered what Will would look like wrapped up in a coat and scarf, head tilted back and fluttering his eyelashes at the sensation of snowflakes landing on his smiling face. Hannibal imagined Will lounging on the floor of his study, dressed in nothing but one of Hannibal's shirts, bathing in the warmth of the lit fire. He imagined making love to Will in front of the fire, tender kisses and soft touches as he was held captive by Will's pleasure.

It was eating Hannibal alive from the inside out to not call Elijah, to book Will's time and pay for a date with him. Will would have refused, of course. He'd told Hannibal that Elijah never forced one of his escorts into a date if they didn't want to do it. The choice was always theirs.

Hannibal had considered simply turning up at Will's apartment, waiting and watching in the shadows to see when Will would enter and leave the building. Of slipping into the complex, making his way to Will's apartment and breaking in to wait inside for him to return. He could; he could have done all of those things so easily. Could have stolen Will away in the middle of the night and made sure it appeared as if the two of them simply vanished like smoke.

But Hannibal didn't do any of those things, of course. He simply waited. Simply faced that silence every day, the aching hollow inside of him growing with every hour that Will did not seek him out. A fool in love, indeed.

Elijah grimaced as Will knocked back another whiskey, immediately flagging down the bartender and ordering another.

"You know I'm not one to judge, but maybe you want to slow down," Elijah suggested, raising an eyebrow.

Will snorted. "Why? Has your generosity run out? Not going to pay the tab anymore?"

"I think you'd be drinking this excessively whether I was footing the bill or not," Elijah retorted dryly.

Elijah never let Will, or any of the other boys, spend a dime when they were out with him. Will didn't take up Elijah's offer of drinks or dinner often, but he relented when his manager had all but ordered Will to meet him, telling him he needed to see Will.

"Are you finally going to tell me what you needed to see me about so badly then?" Will asked, exasperated already by the look on Elijah's face.

"You're overworking yourself," Elijah came out with it, bluntly. "You've been taking on too many bookings. You look like shit, Will."

Will laughed humourlessly. "Oh, you really know how to make a guy feel special, don't you?"

"I'm not joking with you, you prick," Elijah cursed at him, shaking his head. "I'm telling you you're going to wear yourself into the ground if you're not careful, Will. You need to slow down."

"I'm keeping myself busy. Being productive," Will rebutted, refusing to look at Elijah and instead staring intently at his whiskey. "Earning myself a living. Earning *you* a shit load of cash… you're welcome, by the way."

"You asshole," Elijah growled. "Don't throw the topic of money about like you think I give a shit. Stop deflecting and *listen* to me; you need to take a step back, take some time off."

"Or what?" Will asked spitefully. "You gonna let me go, fire me, for making you too much money?"

"I won't give you any more bookings if I think it's damaging your wellbeing. All you've done is work for two months solid, night after night Will. You even let that guy, what was his name - Naylor? You let him take you away on a coke fuelled binge on his yacht for four days; what's gotten into you?"

Heartbreak. His vile, ashen heart breaking in two, that was what had gotten into Will.

“Yes,” Will replied flatly, sipping his whiskey. “And we had a *wonderful* time and I earned a shit load of cash. You ever sucked anyone’s dick whilst they’re trying to steer a yacht, Elijah? It’s quite the thrill.”

“You’re not funny. Not even remotely.”

“So what then? What am I supposed to do?” Will sighed dramatically. “I can’t win - you want to fire me because I’m too good at this job?”

“I’m not firing - would you just *listen* to me, you stubborn headed - ”

“Don’t finish that sentence,” Will cut him off. “I’m not in a very forgiving mood today.”

“What the hell happened, Will? Everything was normal until two months ago. You just all of sudden started taking bookings on left, right and centre, working back to back. I *know* you want to pay Crawford off, I get it - ”

“You really don’t - ”

“ - but you’re going to make yourself ill. Take a breather. Take some time off. Catch up on your sleep, because I’m sure as hell there’s no amount of concealer that can cover up the bags underneath your eyes. And get a fucking burger down yourself whilst you’re at it, you clearly haven’t been eating properly.”

“I’ve been eating tremendously, actually,” Will drawled, “I’m eating at so many expensive restaurants where they serve you those tiny, pathetic little portions, lost count of all the liquid lunches I’ve had with clients. Who’d have thought champagne and uppers did such wonders for your figure?”

“Will,” Elijah sighed. “I know something happened with that Lecter guy. I’m not gonna press you to talk about it, but I’m worried you got in too deep with him and now you’re lashing out at yourself.”

Will visibly stiffened. “Who?”

“Don’t act like you don’t know who I’m talking about,” Elijah muttered, Will’s surliness starting to test him. “Hannibal Lecter. The guy who *you* personally passed my details along to, the guy who you insisted only had a booking with you and you only, the guy who paid - ”

“Him? What about him? He’s got nothing to do with anything,” Will interrupted, shrugging. “There’s nothing wrong with me, Elijah. I’m just doing my job.”

“To the detriment of your health,” Elijah pointed out. “You know better than to fall in too deep with a client, to get attached. Whatever happened with Lecter, punishing yourself by overworking yourself isn’t going to fix anything. I’m just glad you at least had the common sense to stop seeing him before it had the chance to become anything more serious.”

Will wanted to smash his glass of whiskey over the back of Elijah’s head. He wanted to slam Elijah face first into the bar, knock his teeth down his throat and watch his manager choke on them. *Common sense* ? Will had ripped himself to pieces walking away from Hannibal, had

ripped up his own feebly hopeful heart and dashed it against the wall - how *dare* he call it common sense, what Will had done. Will was suffering, day in and day out, all for the sake of this common sense Elijah spoke of.

But instead, Will merely said:

“I didn’t fall in too deep with him. I didn’t even know him, not really. We just had a few dates and fucked, he wasn’t anything special.”

“Well, whatever happened with him - or *didn’t* happen - I still think you need to take some time off, some time for yourself. I’m cutting back your hours, reducing your bookings.”

Will knew not to fight it. Knew better than to protest, stomp his feet and throw a tantrum about it. Because he knew deep down Elijah was right - he felt like shit, knew he was starting to look like it too. He was exhausted, gutting himself every day to plaster that fake fucking smile onto his face for his clients. His body was not thanking him for the surplus sex either.

Still, it was nowhere near as bad as it had been in Vegas. In Los Angeles.

Nothing would ever be as bad as that. Never.

“Fine,” Will muttered.

“Fine?” Elijah repeated, looking dumbfounded. “That’s it? No… no fighting about it, telling me I’m a bastard, and who the hell do I think I am to control you?”

“You’re my boss. Your say is final.”

Elijah watched him, eyes narrowed. “Something really *is* wrong with you, Graham. You fight me tooth and nail over the tiniest thing you disagree with.”

“And what good is it gonna do me?” Will snapped bitterly at him. “I can’t get those bookings myself, not if I wanna violate our contract and lose my job - which I *don’t* - so what else do you expect me to do?”

Elijah studied the way Will gripped the glass of his whiskey too tightly, the way the muscle in Will’s sharp, defined jaw worked. He took a deep breath and then relented.

“Frederick Chilton got in touch again. Asked for a date with you.”

Will’s mind flashed immediately with the image of Hannibal’s face morphing into an expression of disgust when they’d talked about Chilton, when Hannibal had admitted he’d been jealous, when Hannibal had dug his thumbs so deeply into those bruises Frederick had left. Will suppressed a shudder.

“I’ll take it,” Will grumbled, running a hand through his hair. “If I’m allowed to, that is.”

“He asked for you, specifically,” Elijah informed him. “I tried to suggest some of the other boys, but he didn’t want to hear it. Insisted it had to be you, because no one else would be

able to please him like you did that night you had your first booking with him. He offered me a stupid amount of money for you."

"Did you take that stupid amount of money he offered you?"

"I told him I'd have to see how busy your month was, check your schedule and get back to him. And that he'd be paying the normal going rate."

"You didn't want the extra money he offered you?"

"No. People like him wave their wealth around like it'll open any and all doors for them. I can't stand it."

"You let Lecter wave *his* wealth around. Let him pay a crazy amount of money for a date."

"That's different," Elijah defended, frowning. "You were the one who asked for him, the one who told me not to book him with any of the other boys. And he didn't wave his wealth around - the fucker somehow charmed me into it, and that *never* happens to me. Chilton was like a rooster squawking and shrieking until he got what he wanted."

"Hmm," Will hummed, studying the veins in the marble of the bar top they sat at.

"I also didn't want to take Chilton's booking because he left you in such a state after the first date you had with him," Elijah grumbled. "I don't enjoy seeing you like that, Will, you or any of the boys. I know it's something you're within your rights to offer your client, and it's at your discretion, but… can you blame me for disliking the sight of you black and blue?"

"Are you going to refuse his booking then?" Will asked, chewing on his lips.

"Probably."

"Don't," Will murmured quietly. "I'll take the booking with him. You have to save face. Don't let an idiot like Chilton make a bad name of your business, not when you've worked this hard."

Elijah grimaced. "You don't have to do that, Will. So what if Chilton can't have a date with you? He'll live."

Will's dark eyes swept to Elijah, his face grave. Something twinged uncomfortably inside of Elijah at the sight.

"Give me the booking. You know your business inside out, Elijah, but listen to me when I'm telling you that you don't want a client badmouthing your agency - especially not someone like Chilton. He's unbearable, but he knows far too many people that use our agency, flits about in far too many social circles that earn us a *lot* of money. You've got a good thing going, and like hell am *I* going to be the reason you lose customers."

Elijah stared back at him, wincing at the hollows of Will's cheeks, the dead look in his eyes and the purple splotches underneath. "I'm not going to subject you to Chilton for the sake of preventing him from spreading criticism about the agency. I started this agency with morals,

Will, to treat my escorts right. I'm sure as fuck not going to throw that out of the window because I've been blinded by money."

"Give me. The fucking. Booking," Will growled, rage burning in those sunken eyes.

Elijah knocked back his drink. "Only if you promise me something."

"What?" Will snarled.

"That you'll rest. That Chilton will be the last booking you take for two weeks. I want you back to normal, Will, not… not whatever it is that's going on with you right now."

"I can't afford to do that."

"You can," Elijah corrected him. "You'll get sick pay."

"Don't be fucking ridiculous," Will scoffed. "I'm not letting you bank roll me for a two weeks whilst I sit about in my apartment doing fuck all, because you feel *bad* . Get a grip, Elijah."

"You'll do it if you don't want me to refuse Chilton's booking."

Will lent forwards on the bar, resting on his elbows, and sank both of his hands into his hair in desperation. "I can't just sit *there* and do nothing for two weeks. I'll go crazy. I need… I *need* to work. I need to go on dates, take clients, keep going - otherwise I'll lose my mind."

"I don't care. Find a new hobby. Take a vacation. But if you're going to do this, deal with Chilton, no bookings for two weeks. You won't lose out on any cash, don't worry. But you need time to get over whatever it is you're dealing with."

Will bit his tongue before he could say something he'd regret, taking a deep breath through his nose and exhaling through his mouth. "Alright. Alright, if that's what you want."

Elijah grunted in appreciation, clapping a hand on Will's back, fingers grasping his shoulder. "Come on, let's go. It's getting late."

Will simply nodded, barely registering getting home as his head was filled with the memory of Hannibal's cruel fingers and thumbs pressing into tender, raw bruises.

Every Trick I Tossed

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Peeping Tom

“Will,” Frederick sighed dreamily, eyes drinking in the image of the escort before him. “You look divine.”

Will did not feel divine; he felt sodden with exhaustion, bones heavy with a tiredness he’d inflicted entirely upon himself. Saturated with self-disgust, unable to stand the sight of himself as he’d dressed in front of the mirror that evening, as he had shaved himself clean after showering in his dingy little bathroom.

He looked good, however, despite how truly awful he felt on the inside. His curls were tousled carefully, framing his face just so. He was clean shaven, doused in the subtle-yet-deep cologne he’d been gifted by a client that he preferred. His suit was a blue so dark it was nearly black, hints of navy glinting under the light when he moved. His cufflinks were vintage Cartier, sapphires set in eighteen carat gold, his classic Zenith watch made of a stainless steel case with a blue sunray-patterned dial and blue alligator leather strap. He’d worn one of the shirts Hannibal had bought, partly because the shirt went well with his suit, partly because he wanted to torture himself. It was a fitted Celine silk shirt, cendré with anthracite pinstripes.

There was little to be done for the gauntness of his face, the clear lack of sleep from the bags under his eyes, eyes that seemed to have turned dull and muggy over the last few months.

“Hardly, Doctor Chilton,” Will murmured softly, allowing Chilton to pull him into a kiss he was not ready for.

It was brief, thankfully.

“You look dashing,” Will complimented him, voice low and dripping like honey. “You’re making me feel underdressed.”

Chilton looked smug, like a pleased little bird ruffling its feathers and puffing its chest out. “Nonsense, Will. Although I dare say you’ll complete my look tonight.”

Of course Will would; Will was an accessory. Nothing more. He would speak only when spoken to, laugh at every idiotic, banal thing Chilton said and sing his praises when the opportunity arose. And then, at the end of the night, Will would let Chilton beat him black and blue whilst they fucked because Frederick had discovered he got off on that sort of stuff, that he liked inflicting pain upon Will.

Will would smile and say thank you the whole time, just for the tip he knew he'd receive in the morning.

"This is a nice bar," Will commented, looking around with fluttering lashes and wide eyes. "You have excellent taste. I've never been here before."

A lie; Will had been here countless times. It was a favourite amongst the rich and wealthy men of Baltimore who were looking to show off their financial prowess and good taste to sugar babies, rent boys and prostitutes. Will was pretty sure he'd fucked a handful of the men he could spot behind them, pointedly ignoring them.

"Ah, well we won't be staying here unfortunately," Chilton informed him, downing the last of his wine. "This was just a convenient meeting place. In fact, we should probably leave now."

A normal person would have protested, would have pointed out that Will had only just walked through the doors and how rude it was that Chilton had been lounging about drinking wine here and hadn't even deigned to buy Will a drink before they left. But Will just smiled, sultry and playful, and raised an eyebrow.

Even if he was imagining prying Chilton's jaws apart so brutally his head snapped in two. He hated the man.

"Oh? Where are we heading tonight then, Doctor Chilton?"

Frederick clapped his hands together gleefully. "A dinner party. Come on, I'm parked out front."

In the car, Will let Frederick chew his ear off about the success of his newest publication, nodding and humming at all the right points (not that Chilton even noticed Will doing *that*), letting the ball of contempt and disdain he had for the man pulsate and grow into something even more monstrous.

It was only when Frederick turned the car down a street that was suddenly horrifyingly familiar, that Will realised where they were heading.

"Where did you say we were going again tonight?" Will interrupted him, fidgeting nervously and smiling.

Frederick looked disgruntled at being cut off, but clucked his tongue and brushed it off. "A friend and esteemed colleague of mine. You met him at the John Hopkins gala - Doctor Lecter, remember? Doctor Bloom will be there too. Lots of great minds gathered… and that pretty face of yours to balance it all out, of course. We couldn't have brains without a little beauty, could we?"

"Oh," Will whispered. "That sounds great."

He was going to be sick.

Frederick carried on blabbering away, parking his car in the nearest available spot along the curb where multiple vehicles were all flocked outside of the dreadfully familiar brownstone, tall and imposing against the night air just like the man who inhabited it.

Will stiffly climbed from the car as Frederick killed the engine and exited, holding an arm out to Will and waiting for him on the sidewalk in the frigid January evening air. Will felt like his bones had turned to lead, his head a frantic frenzy of panic and horror.

“Before we go,” Frederick said sharply, squeezing Will’s bicep, “I want you to remember this is a very important gathering, with lots of important people. I have a reputation to maintain, and I know how well you can behave. So make sure you do, at all times.”

Will forced a demure smile onto his mouth, wishing the ground would swallow him whole. “Of course, Doctor Chilton.”

Will almost recoiled as Frederick’s mouth claimed his in a sloppy, demanding kiss, forcing himself to relax and lean into Frederick’s hold.

“Good boy,” Frederick chuckled, patting Will’s cheek. “I’ll make sure you get a nice treat at the end of this.”

Will wasn’t sure it was entirely the thought of seeing Hannibal again that was making him queasy - Frederick seemed to be doing a magnificent job of that by himself.

Will dutifully tucked himself into Frederick’s side as they approached the front door, inviting music and laughter muffled within the bricks and mortar of the house. Frederick rang the doorbell, fixing a smarmy smile onto his face. Will supposed Frederick thought himself to look handsome; any of that initial attractiveness Will had thought Frederick to have had since been obliterated. The man disgusted Will.

A few moments passed, and Frederick was about to ring the doorbell again when the door swung open. Will couldn’t do it; couldn’t look up, couldn’t take his eyes off the ground he stood on.

“Frederick,” a deep, honeyed rumble sounded. “I’m so pleased you could make it.”

Will was truly, genuinely going to be sick. That, or his heart was going to explode through his chest. Will’s legs trembled, begging him to turn and run. But he couldn’t, couldn’t rip out of Chilton’s grip and flee. Because if Will wanted his fucking money, he was going to have to survive this evening.

“Oh, this must be your plus one?”

“Yes, you remember Will, from the gala?”

Will lifted his head.

He wished he could have just died, right then and there. He wished that God was real, and he would take pity on Will and smite him down with a bolt of lightning on Hannibal Lecter’s doorstep, vaporise him into bloody mist, *anything* - anything other than having to meet

Hannibal's eyes and see the very same heartbreak Will had been feeling for the last two months written clear as day all over Hannibal's face.

"Yes," Hannibal said thickly, his voice sounding entirely alien. "I remember. Nice to see you again, Wil."

"Hello Doctor Lecter," Will rasped, his voice a shredded whisper. "You look well."

A moment that stretched on for eternity passed, and the world fell away around them, until there was nothing left but the two of them. Will forced himself to look away from Hannibal first, back to the floor, breaking the eye contact that was searing him apart inside. He wouldn't cry; he *wouldn't*.

"Oh, is that the lovely Doctor Du Maurier I see?" Frederick trilled obliviously, pushing past Hannibal and letting himself into the man's home uninvited.

Hannibal and Will remained frozen, Hannibal in the doorway and Will outside. It was only when a snappish ' *Will!'* from Chilton sounded from inside that Will moved, trembling violently as he stepped towards Hannibal. Hannibal moved aside, letting him breeze past. They didn't touch, but Will felt as if he'd been flayed alive at the sheer proximity.

"Excuse me," he choked out, blinking rapidly and following Frederick inside.

Hannibal said nothing, simply shutting the front door and watching Will walk into his home.

"You have been staring at that boy from the moment he arrived," Bedelia observed in that quiet, eloquent breathy way that she had. "Is something the matter, Hannibal?"

Hannibal's fingers flexed around his wine glass. He wanted so desperately to pour his heart out to Bedelia, to confess how wretchedly obsessed he was with Will Graham and how the boy had broken both of their hearts for them after Hannibal had offered his up to Will on a platter that morning in his chilly, bleak little apartment in November. But he didn't; that was a topic for a private conversation in therapy, not standing side by side in Hannibal's parlour as the hors d'oeuvres were passed around.

"Nothing is the matter," Hannibal reassured her with a smooth smile that he hoped reached his eyes.

Knowing Bedelia, she probably saw right through it.

She pursed her lips but remained silent, simply lifting her flute of champagne to her perfectly painted rogue lips.

"I'm just going to check on how things are in the kitchen, if you wish to join me," Hannibal offered politely.

"And miss the opportunity to observe the boy that has Hannibal Lecter worked up into such knots?" Bedelia quipped, raising a perfectly plucked eyebrow. "I'm fine here, thank you."

Hannibal retreated; what else could he do?

Across the room, Will was lingering by Frederick's side dutifully, eyes straying to float around the room and observe the crowd every few moments, before returning back to staring at Frederick's shoes.

There were a lot of people here, all dressed in finery with airs and graces. Will thought Frederick must look like such a fool to them, so vulgar, showing up with an escort on his arm. At least Will looked expensive, he supposed.

Will had never been in this room before, admiring the consistency of Hannibal's scrupulous interior design. Artisan custom wallpaper, the subtly planted textures of bone and flesh, artwork hung in thick golden frames… Some of Hannibal's furniture, like the Venetian cream chair opposite him, looked like it belonged in a national history museum, but none of it seemed outdated. There was a string quartet playing in the corner of the room, hired catering staff floating around with trays of champagne and plates of hors d'oeuvres, flowers teeming in displays by the fireplace, candles lit within tall glass jars atop the harpsichord… It was beautiful. Everything so meticulously planned down to the last detail.

And whilst the other people stood around him, the people chattering and drinking Hannibal's champagne, most likely saw nothing *but* the care and atmosphere Hannibal had crafted, Will saw nothing but the ferocious, snarling monster that needed to control. Will was witnessing first hand just how well that image had been cultivated that he'd pointed out to Hannibal when they'd first met.

Will was distinctly aware of Hannibal leaving the room without even having to look, every other sense he possessed finely honed on monitoring the movements of the older man all night. Will's brain ached with the strain of it, of tracking every twitch and minute movement across the room from Hannibal in the corner of his eye, of trying to pay attention to Frederick and play his role at the same time. He allowed himself, for just a moment, to flit his eyes over to where he knew he'd find the empty space Hannibal had left.

His gaze met those assessing, cool eyes across the room. The eyes that had been like needlepoints on him all night, eyes that belonged to the small blonde woman that had been by Hannibal's side for much of the evening. She was just as meticulously crafted as Hannibal, a twin flame to Hannibal's obsessive, controlling monster. Will found her attractive in the same way he found the gleam of a knife attractive, the same way he found himself attracted to the slink of a jaguar's shoulder blades hitching up and down as it prowled towards its prey. She was cold, icy and calculated, nothing warm in her gaze as she stared Will down. She seemed perfect for Doctor Hannibal Lecter.

Will suppressed the wave of nausea he felt at the idea of Hannibal taking her to bed. He no doubt had, at some point. Just like he had Alana Bloom.

Will had to remind himself he was a whore. He was the *last* person on earth who got to get jealous, got to feel possessive over another human being. Those things were not for him, not when he saw himself as so impure, when he was anybody's man for the right price.

“So, Will, what is it that you do again?” Alana Bloom was asking him sweetly, attentively, breaking free of Frederick’s dithering and droning. “I realised I never asked you when we met all those months ago. I hope you don’t think of me as rude.”

Will opened his mouth to answer, but Frederick did the answering for him.

“Oh, Will is a clerk,” Frederick butted in. “For an insurance company. Aren’t you, Will?”

“Yes,” Will smiled tightly, trying not to snap the stem of Hannibal’s no doubt priceless champagne flute in his hand.

“How long have you been doing that for?” Alana inquired, making painfully polite, dull, conversation.

“Too long,” Will quipped and gave her a charming smile, lifting his drink to his mouth. “It’s far more fascinating being amongst all of your kind tonight, Doctor Bloom. All of you so knowledgeable about the workings of the human mind… I must say I’m out of my depth.”

“Not at all,” Alana insisted, her smile genuine and kind.

Will liked that smile. But he wanted to turn his back and walk away from her before the anger boiled too close to the surface at knowing that she’d been fucked by Hannibal. Will’s only consolation was that it must have been entirely vanilla and trite, a way for Hannibal to pass the time.

Thankfully, one of the catering assistants had rapped a fork against the side of a glass, summoning them all to the dining room for the main event; dinner was served.

“No titillating speech before we all dig in this evening?” Bedelia murmured in amusement to Hannibal’s right.

Hannibal watched her delicately lift her fork to her mouth, neatly sliced vegetables and meat stacked on the prongs disappearing into her mouth. “I apologise, Bedelia. I shall have something prepared next time, just for you.”

She chuckled, shaking her head. “I do wish you would tell me what it is that’s bothering you this evening.”

“I believe you already know,” Hannibal shot back.

“Yes,” she mused, “but I don’t want to make assumptions about the nature of your… entanglement with the young man Doctor Chilton has brought this evening.”

Said young man was at the other end of the table, sitting next to Chilton and picking at his food, barely eating. Will’s hollow eyes bore into the table before him, only looking up and seeming remotely human when Frederick required his attention, like a switch he continuously turned on and off.

Hannibal was loath to see him like that. When Will had lifted his head and met Hannibal's eyes at the door earlier in the evening, Hannibal had felt his blood run cold. All those days, those weeks of waiting for Will to reach out to him, and the boy had turned up on his doorstep with *Chilton* . Hannibal had wanted to be enraged, furious, but then he saw how utterly depleted of light those once sparkling blue eyes were. Will looked like a corpse dressed in finery, Chilton's play thing for the evening by his side. He looked beautiful, devastatingly so, and Hannibal's heart had clenched at the sight of Will wearing one of the shirts Hannibal had bought for him. But despite how impeccably groomed and dressed Will was this evening, there was nothing to hide the new sharpness of his already defined jaw and cheekbones, the sallow pallor of his skin, the blood shot eyes and clear exhaustion in the bags underneath.

Will had suffered during their time apart, just as much as Hannibal it seemed, but in an entirely different way. He longed to send everyone home, take Will to bed, shut the entire world out until it was just the two of them and nothing else for the rest of time.

But he couldn't; Will was not his. Will was, for this evening, bought and paid for by Frederick Chilton. Hannibal never imagined he would ever have been *jealous* of Chilton, but here they were.

Hannibal had purposely placed Frederick at the end of the table, as far away from him as possible by some other acquaintances he was not particularly bothered about. Frederick had seemed insulted at first that he was so far away from Hannibal at the table, but was prattling away to the other guests he sat by, chewing their ear off about himself most likely. And Will… Will simply existed there next to him, smiling and laughing and nodding when he noticed Frederick expected it of him.

Hannibal, for the first time ever, was put off of his food.

He'd placed Bedelia and Alana at the head of the table next to him, had planned on being fully content to spend his evening making intelligent conversation with the two other doctors - except his stomach had dropped when Will had caught his eye across the room as they'd all been settling down into the seating placements. Of course Hannibal knew how it must look to the boy, the way he'd placed Alana and Bedelia on either side of him; Will had no doubt taken one look at Bedelia and worked out that Hannibal had had a tryst with her too, just like Alana.

It would look, to Will, like Hannibal was rubbing it in his face. Putting Alana and Bedelia next to him, and Will at the other end of the room with Chilton. Hannibal just hoped the boy didn't despise him too much, that he must have known Hannibal had no idea Will would be here tonight.

"There's something not quite… oh, never mind, I don't want to gossip."

Hannibal zoned back in, realising he'd been completely lost in thought.

"What do you think, Hannibal?"

Hannibal looked over to Bedelia, who was looking back at him expectantly.

“About?”

“About Doctor Chilton’s companion,” Bedelia drawled.

There was a glint of cold calculation in her words, her eyes, that Hannibal had never been able to bring himself to dislike; no, he admired her for it. A viper with a clever tongue.

“I couldn’t really say,” Hannibal replied noncommittally, unbothered. “I don’t know him well enough to judge of his character.”

“But don’t you think there’s something odd about the way Frederick is with him?” Alana insisted, eyes filled with concern.

Of course she was concerned for Will; Alana was like that, caring and considerate, so sensitive to those who seemed to be plagued with even the slightest suffering. It was part of what made her such a successful doctor.

“What do you believe the issue to be?” Hannibal asked carefully.

“Frederick is… difficult at the best of times, but there’s something off about the way he treats Will. I can’t quite work out the nature of their relationship.”

“Perhaps he prefers to let Frederick do the talking,” Bedelia suggested. “After all, surely there’s only so much a *clerk* can have in common with esteemed psychiatrists and doctors.”

Hannibal sipped his wine to contain the rage that bubbled within him; he knew Bedelia was trying to get a rise out of him, and he would not take the bait. But the way she’d sneered at the word *clerk* … as if she knew. She knew what Will was, and knew Hannibal had paid to fuck the escort sat at the bottom of his dinner table too, just like Frederick.

“I just hope he’s alright,” Alana sighed. “Frederick seems so dismissive of him, and Will just seems to… *let* him.”

Hannibal tore his eyes away from Will at the other end of the table. “I’m positive Will can hold his own against Frederick.”

“Anyway,” Bedelia smiled delicately, poised. “Tell me about this newest paper of yours you’re working on, Doctor Bloom.”

Will lost count of how many courses the meal was. He felt sick to his stomach, barely able to eat more than a few mouthfuls of each plate that was set down in front of him. He’d managed to drink half a glass of champagne in the parlour before the meal had begun and that was it, his wine untouched, just about able to drink the water he also had.

But it ended, finally. And he’d made up his mind. He could no longer linger by Frederick’s side, beam at his every word and be the pretty accessory he was supposed to be this evening. Not when Hannibal was *right there* and Will’s skin was crawling, itching to throw himself at the older man’s feet and beg for forgiveness.

As there was a flurry of movement as catering assistants cleared plates and Hannibal's guests all rose to head back to the parlour, Will's eyes tracked every single movement Hannibal made. He let Frederick walk ahead of him, still boring the poor couple they'd been seated by during dinner to death. He didn't even notice that Will wasn't right beside him anymore.

And then, just as the room had emptied, Will slipped into the kitchen where he'd seen Hannibal disappear to.

These Bonds Are Shackle Free

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Ask for Answers

Will waited with his back pressed against the wall for Hannibal to notice him, lingering in the shadows in the corner of the room whilst the doctor swiftly moved about the kitchen, helping the catering staff.

Hannibal turned, eventually, freezing in place when he saw the curly headed escort lingering in the shadows.

“Will,” he breathed.

Will couldn’t move; his joints had locked into place.

Hannibal stepped closer to him, as if he was afraid Will would dart out of the kitchen if he got too near. But he didn’t, as Hannibal crept closer to him, holding his breath. Will simply watched him, drinking in the sight of Hannibal’s painfully handsome face, the taut muscles that moved so precisely beneath his finely tailored suit. He finally stopped a few feet away, just within arm’s reach if Will wanted to stretch forwards and grasp him by the lapels of his suit jacket and haul him towards him. Or shove him away by the shoulders - Hannibal couldn’t predict what the boy would do.

“I’m sorry,” Will blurted out in a rushed whisper, barely audible amongst the noise from the catering assistants clearing away in the kitchen. “I didn’t know… I didn’t know he was going to bring me here. I wouldn’t have come if I’d known, wouldn’t have taken on the job...”

Hannibal was lost for words; he’d thought so many times about what he would say when he saw Will again after they’d parted with such animosity, but now that he was stood before the man he’d been obsessing over since he’d seen him slip into the ballroom of the Sagamore Pendry hotel at that charity auction with a client all those months ago… words failed him.

“I’m glad you’re here,” Hannibal finally replied, his accent thickened from the emotions he was battling to keep out of his voice. “I… I had started to think I’d never see you again.”

“You weren’t supposed to,” Will breathed, the façade he’d worn on his face so well all night finally starting to crack.

“And yet fate has a funny way of hurling us back into each other’s paths, time and time again,” Hannibal murmured softly. “I don’t think I can stand to see you leave here tonight.”

“Don’t watch, then.”

“Why did you seek me out?” Hannibal gritted out. “Why slip away from Frederick?”

“Because I’m impulsive,” Will stated bitterly. “Because I’ve felt you watching me all night and it’s like your eyes have branded my skin and burnt holes through me all the way down to my bones.”

Hannibal’s heart thundered at Will’s confession - there was a miasma of emotions flitting across Will’s face as they stared at each other, but the pang of *want* and desolation so clearly illustrated across Will’s features was like an ice-pick to the chest. Hannibal could sense curious eyes on them from the catering staff behind, suddenly feeling the urge to swoop Will away from prying eyes and ears. So he cleared his throat loudly, shot Will a look and said:

“I’d love to show you a new vintage I’ve just had imported. It’s in the pantry - shall we?”

Will took the hint straight away - of course his bright, brilliant mind was working just as fast as Hannibal’s, on the same wavelength. “Of course. That sounds excellent.”

Hannibal ushered him inside of the pantry, letting the door swing closed, hiding them from the commotion in the kitchen.

Will threw himself at Hannibal before the man could even draw breath to utter another word, slinging his arms around Hannibal’s neck and crashing their lips together.

Hannibal was caught off guard, for a split second, genuinely not expecting Will to even smile at him, never mind *this* . But he knew not to waste Will’s affection, his touch. His grip was borderline violent as he pulled Will’s lithe body flush to his, one hand around his waist, the other snatching a fistful of curls at the back of his head. He walked Will backwards, caring very little for the way the impact of Will’s back hitting the wall rattled bottles of wine that cost thousands of dollars. Will opened his mouth to him, moaning softly, his tongue stroking into Hannibal’s. Hannibal kissed him back with bruising force until they were gasping for air, pulling apart for a few moments before their lips collided again, teeth biting and tongues invading.

Hannibal pressed Will even further into the wall, wishing to be the only thing Will could feel, see, hear. Until their bodies somehow absorbed each other, melded into one and never to be separated again.

Hannibal’s teeth latched onto Will’s earlobe, grinning at the soft whimper it elicited, Will throwing his head back against the wall. He kissed his way down Will’s throat, licked over the throb of his pulse in his neck.

“Hannibal,” Will gasped.

“Tell me what you want, Will,” Hannibal growled against the collar of Will’s shirt, teeth grazing back up to Will’s sharp jaw. “Tell me what *I’m* supposed to do, tell me how I’m supposed to get through the rest of this cursed evening.”

“Send them all home,” Will gulped, squeezing Hannibal’s shoulders. “I’ll slip away from Chilton. Find my way back here after we leave.”

“You would do that?” Hannibal asked, kissing the corner of Will’s mouth. “Come back to me?”

Will clasped Hannibal’s face between his hands, eyes wide and so full of fear. “I’ve been killing myself so slowly since we last saw each other. I can’t stand it any longer, Hannibal.”

Hannibal lunged back for Will’s mouth, delighting in the way Will kissed him so desperately, as if he needed him just as much as he needed air.

“Excuse me?” Frederick sighed irritably, catching the attention of one of the few remaining catering staff who was finishing clearing away in the kitchen.

“How may I help sir?”

Frederick looked the woman up and down, scrutinising her. “I’m looking for a friend of mine… curly hair, navy suit, blue eyes - ”

“Ah - sure, I think I saw him go into the pantry with Doctor Lecter,” she replied with a helpful smile.

Frederick’s eye twitched. “I beg your pardon?”

“The pantry - it’s just over there. I believe Doctor Lecter said something about wanting to show your friend a vintage he - ”

“Thank you,” Chilton cut her off, voice clipped and flat.

Frederick braced himself, striding towards the closed door of the pantry, blood already boiling. He grasped the handle and wrenched it open, in no way prepared for what he found inside.

Hannibal Lecter, *the* Hannibal Lecter, was virtually mauling Frederick’s escort. He had Will pinned against the wall by the wine racks, trapping Will’s wrists above his head on the wall with one hand and the full weight of his body fixing Will in place. His other hand was plunged down the front of Will’s unfastened suit trousers, belt buckle undone and fly down. He was kissing Will savagely, their mouths moving in a hot, wet tandem against each other.

And Will… Will was squirming under Hannibal’s touch, seeming to be elated to be pinned by Hannibal against the wall, gasps and moans escaping their locked lips, no doubt from what Hannibal’s hand was doing below his waist.

“I hate to interrupt,” Frederick drawled, “but last time I checked, Will, you didn’t double book yourself for the evening.”

The pair froze, Hannibal’s hand immediately withdrawing from Will’s trousers and fastening him back up, buckling his belt again for Will. He released Will, but to Frederick’s surprise, did not move away from the escort. He simply turned and stood in front of Will, blocking him from Frederick’s view as if he were trying to shield the escort. His eyes were sparkling

with a possessive frenzy that Frederick had never imagined a man as sophisticated as Hannibal Lecter would be capable of.

“Frederick,” Hannibal said roughly. “Perhaps you’d be willing to return to the party. I’ll be back shortly, if you’ll forgive me for neglecting my hosting duties.”

“It seems you’ve been doing a little bit too much hosting, cooped up in here with Will,” Frederick spat, disgusted. “Tell me, Doctor Lecter, do all of your guests receive such tentative hospitality?”

“Doctor Chilton, I can explain,” Will pleaded from behind Hannibal, eyes wide and frantic. “It’s not Hannibal’s fault, I was the one who - ”

“Did I ask you?” Frederick snarled. “Keep your mouth shut if you know what’s good for you. My God, your manager is going to have one hell of a refund to organise after I send you back to him.”

Will swallowed heavily. “This is entirely my fault, I - ”

“Of course it is!” Frederick cackled bitterly. “I suppose no matter how much you pay out for a whore, you can’t guarantee the quality of the service. Can’t guarantee that they won’t throw themselves at anything with a pulse.”

“Frederick,” Hannibal said, voice low, eyes darkening even further.

“I’m shocked, Hannibal, that *you* let that slut draw you into this predicament - surely you’re better than that?” Frederick sneered, lip curling.

“I’d suggest you think carefully about how you address me. About how you address Will,” Hannibal warned him, stepping a fragment closer to Frederick.

Frederick opened his mouth to retaliate, but was interrupted by the soft call of Alana Bloom somewhere from within the kitchen.

“Hannibal? Are you in here?” she queried. “People are asking for you.”

Frederick glowered at the pair before him. “Later. We’ll continue this later, after all the other guests have gone. I’ll be expecting the mother of all apologies, Hannibal.”

With that, he turned and sharply exited the pantry, plastering a smile onto his face as he spotted Alana. All the catering staff had gone, the kitchen spotless once more. “Doctor Bloom - you look radiant this evening. Will and I were just selecting another bottle from the pantry with Hannibal; it seems even the omniscient Doctor Lecter needs help choosing a good wine from time to time.”

Frederick’s fingers curled into fists at his sides as he heard Hannibal and Will exit the pantry behind him.

Hannibal stepped past him, holding a bottle aloft to Alana. “Indeed. Frederick’s taste is superb - would you like the first glass, Alana?”

Alana smiled, oblivious. “Oh no, thank you. You know I’m more of a beer kind of girl.”

Hannibal chuckled, as if nothing had happened, and set the wine on the side. “Of course. Let me go and get you a fresh glass. Why don’t you three go back and enjoy the party? I’ll be there in just a moment.”

“Excellent,” Frederick grinned too widely, too stiffly. “We’ll see you shortly, Hannibal.”

Frederick snatched Will to his side, gloating as he saw the flash of fury in Hannibal’s eyes at the way his fingers dug too sharply into Will’s ribs as he exited the kitchen with Will and Alana.

Now Your Lover Went And Put Me In The Ground

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Brick Shithouse

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Frederick had grasped Will by the wrist and dragged him out of the parlour as the last of the guests began to leave, stalking down the halls of Hannibal's home until they reached Hannibal's study.

He'd kept Will by his side the entire time they'd been in parlour after dinner, after Frederick had discovered him in the pantry with Hannibal. Even if Will had shuffled away the tiniest bit, Frederick's grip around his waist tightened, yanking him back into his side. Will hadn't thought it was possible for him to feel any more nauseous than he had all evening, but he truly thought he might empty his guts all over Hannibal's gleaming mahogany floorboards if the suspense went on any longer.

Elijah was going to kill him. Hell, Frederick might even kill him.

"Get inside," Frederick hissed at him, shoving him forwards.

It was dark except for a single lamp lit in the corner of the decadently decorated room and the embers of a fire slowly dying in the hearth. Despite the severity of the situation Will was in, he had to admire how so many of Hannibal's rooms had fireplaces - warmth oozing from the heart of every room in the house.

"Do I even want to hear whatever pathetic excuse you've got lined up as to why I found you all over Doctor Lecter in that pantry?" Frederick began, his eyes blazing.

"Probably not," Will gritted out truthfully. "I… I'm sorry, Doctor Chilton. It shouldn't have happened."

"You're damn right it shouldn't have happened," Fredrick spat. " *I* paid for you, you shameless whore! Did you think you could just get paid for this evening and then have your way with whoever took your fancy on the side?"

Will had been called so many awful, terrible things in his life. He didn't even register the insults anymore, they'd become so commonplace. But as he stood before Chilton in Hannibal's study, nothing but the fire crackling behind him, Will realised that he'd had enough. Enough of men like Chilton treating him as if he was so disposable and dirty, when there was a man stood seeing off his guests on his driveway who was ready to lay the world at Will's feet.

The first and only man who'd ever seen Will for more than what he was.

Will stepped forwards. "Don't call me a whore. Just because you paid for this evening doesn't mean you get to insult me."

"Oh, believe me my dear, if I wanted to insult you then you would know about it. I'm simply stating facts - what you are is a *whore* ," Chilton scoffed. "One that can't seem to keep their hands to themselves. Doctor Lecter is a respectable man and you risked disgracing his reputation tonight; it's lucky that I found you and no one else."

"A respectable man?" Will repeated, smiling incredulously. "What does that make you then, Frederick? What does that make *you* , when you're the one who had to pay me to be here tonight, to hang off your arm and simper after you like a fucking lap dog?"

Chilton recoiled, aghast at Will's response. He'd clearly not expected Will to push back, to show his teeth; he tried to collect himself as quickly as he could.

"It makes me in a position to do whatever the hell I want with you," Frederick hissed, not backing down, stepping closer to Will.

"I think it's safe to say I won't do one more single thing you tell me to, and I'm not going anywhere with you after this," Will informed him, lip curled in distaste. "Elijah will refund you every penny, don't worry."

The tumbler of whiskey that Frederick clutched in his hand collided with the side of Will's head before Will could lurch out of the way, the blow shocking him and sending him staggering back. Blood began to obscure his vision straight away, sharp pain burning through his scalp and forehead from where the glass had shattered against his head.

"You will do exactly as I say," Frederick seethed, stalking towards Will. "You're mine for the evening, whether you like it or not."

Will retreated as he got closer, heart pounding in his chest. Chilton seized him by the lapels of his suit jack and hauled Will against one of the towering bookshelf units built into the wall to the right of them. Books tumbled to the ground at the impact, Will's skull knocking back against the wood with a *thud* , sending his head spinning.

"Shameless, desperate *slut* ," Chilton seethed, almost foaming at the mouth. "All you're good for is taking cock - don't you *dare* think you can talk back to me."

From where he had Will pinned against the bookshelf, Frederick raised his arm, poised to strike as he held Will in place. Will shut his eyes, teeth rattling in his skull as Chilton struck him across the face, the same side he'd smashed the glass against. Will hissed as he felt the chips of glass bury further into his skin. Will's vision spun as he was hurled away from the bookshelf, careening to the floor and landing heavily on his shoulder with a skid.

As Chilton loomed into view from Will's good eye, the other blurred and congealed from the blood that trickled down into his vision from the gashes above it, Will gritted his teeth and remembered the first time he'd come home after a fight at school.

He'd been twelve and had limped onto the porch with a bust lip and a black eye. He hadn't known what to expect from his father, but it hadn't been another beating. His father's eyes had darkened, and he'd dragged Will inside the house by the scruff of his neck. Then the belt came.

"Next time you're stupid enough to get yourself in a fight, boy, don't bother comin' home unless you won, you hear?"

And Will hadn't; had only ever returned with scraped knuckles and nothing more from that day onwards, chin held high.

Maybe it was the lingering remains of his father's scorn that spurred him on in that moment then, or the utter contempt he held for Chilton, but as the older man approached Will where he lay on the floor, Will decided he could not just lay there and let Chilton beat him to a pulp until Hannibal found them.

Will did not need a knight in shining armour. He needed to save himself.

He swung his leg out forcefully, knocking Chilton's ankles out beneath him and sending the man to the floor with him in one fell swoop. Will lunged for him before Chilton could scramble back up, pinning him to the floor with his body weight. Chilton kicked out feebly as Will pounced on him, trying to claw uselessly at Will's face as Will landed the first of his own blows.

His knuckles sang with the pain, but something wicked inside of Will howled in delight at the burst of blood that bloomed across Chilton's face from his nose after Will punched him. Chilton yelled out for help, but the sound was cut short as Will landed another punch, Frederick's head ricocheting to the side.

Will barely registered the way fingernails gouged at his neck and jaw, barely felt the impact of Frederick's own strikes as he tried to fight Will off, tried to buck Will's immovable weight from him.

Wet squelches started to sound from Will's blows to Chilton's face, crimson staining Will's hands. Chilton was gurgling, wriggling pathetically beneath him. Will felt bone crack beneath his hands, unsure of whether it was Chilton's brow bone or cheek bone.

Shameless whore.

Shameless, desperate ***slut*** .

And yet here you are, still selling yourself. It's all you can do now, isn't it, Will? You don't know any other way of living.

All you're good for is taking cock.

Come on, kid. You're here now, and it's good money. Shirt off.

Did you hear that, Will? You're a piece of ***shit*** *!*

You stupid little brat.

You were pathetic, snivelling on the sidewalk.

You don't mind the black eye, do you? He won't disappoint you, I promise.

Every word, every sneer, every pair of hands that had ever held him down or hurt him - it all circled in a screeching, scorching loop in Will's head as he wrapped his own hands around Chilton's throat and *squeezed* .

The doctor floundered beneath him, wet, choking sounds spluttering up from his injured mouth as he clawed at Will's hands, his fingernails bloody from where he'd gouged at Will's neck. Will felt an indescribable sense of calm sink into his bones as he watched Chilton weaken, heard the kicks of his legs reduce to nothing but a limp scuffle against the floorboards as Will squeezed the life from him. He pressed down harder, harder, until Chilton's ruptured eyes were rolling back in their broken sockets.

Will felt it, the moment the life left Frederick's body. It was as soft as a whisper, feather light in its extinguish. It was *beautiful* .

The man beneath him went limp. His chest was still. His arms dropped like lead to either side of him.

He was dead. Will had just killed him. And he felt *nothing* - nothing but roiling, throbbing power coursing through his nervous system as he straddled the corpse of Doctor Chilton.

"Will…"

Will turned, slowly.

"Is he dead, Will?"

“ *H-Hannibal!* ” Will choked, scrambling away from Chilton’s body. “I- I - ”

Hannibal moved from the doorway where he was standing - for how long he’d been there, Will did not know - and crossed the room to Will’s side. Will was frozen in place, not quite sure that this was real. That Hannibal was crouching before him with pure, unmitigated amazement in his eyes.

Will’s breath caught in his throat as Hannibal’s warm, broad palms lifted to cup Will’s face as if he were a flower made from glass. “Darling boy - does it hurt badly? I’ll need you to come with me in a moment so I can tend to your injuries.”

“I killed him,” Will whispered. “Hannibal, I killed Frederick.”

Hannibal’s eyes drifted to the corpse between them, letting go of Will to press two fingers against the pulse on Frederick’s throat. When he found none, he looked up at Will with a soft smile.

“Yes, you did,” Hannibal replied softly. “And so beautifully, as well.”

“Are you - what - Hannibal, he’s *dead* !” Will spluttered. “What are you talking about?!”

Hannibal sighed, standing slowly, as if he was worried any sudden movement would startle Will. “It’s alright, *mielas daiktas* . You’re going into shock, most likely. Everything will be fine - I promise you. I can help you.”

“ *Help* me?” Will repeated, seemingly unable to do anything but repeat Hannibal and point out that Chilton was dead.

Hannibal nodded. “Come. Let’s get you cleaned up first.”

And because he didn’t know what else to do, didn’t know if he *could* do anything else, Will simply took Hannibal’s outstretched hand and let the man pull him to his feet, righting him as his knees threatened to buckle beneath him.

“Exquisite, Will… simply exquisite.”

Will barely registered the pain as Hannibal cleaned and bandaged Will’s hands. As he disinfected Will’s battered face, plucked the shards of glass from his scalp. He didn’t make a sound as Hannibal lovingly placed butterfly strips over the gashes on his head, sterilising the gouges left behind on Will’s neck from Chilton’s clawing.

“There’s a dead man in your study,” Will said flatly, eyes unseeing.

“So there is.”

“Are you going to call the police?”

“No, I’m not.”

“I have just… just murdered Frederick,” Will whispered, his voice sounding so entirely unfamiliar, not his own. “And you’re not going to do anything?”

“Of course not; I’m not just going to leave him there.”

“Hannibal I’m so *confused* ,” Will rasped, a sob blooming in his chest. “What the fuck is happening?”

Hannibal kissed the top of his curls, drenched in sweat and in need of shampooing to cleanse the blood and the stench of rage away. “I’m going to deal with it, Will. You don’t need to worry about anything. Let me just take care of it all, take care of you, darling.”

“Why are you so calm?” Will demanded, lurching out of Hannibal’s touch. “I just fucking strangled Frederick to death and you’re acting as if it’s *nothing* !”

Hannibal’s eyes looked like bottomless pits in the artificial lighting of his ensuite. He seemed otherworldly, like some sort of incubus that had slithered in through the cracks in the walls, not a shred of light behind his shark-like eyes.

“It is not *nothing* , Will. I suspect it is singlehandedly the most pivotal moment of your life so far.”

“ *I killed him!* ” Will screamed, bolting to his feet from where he’d perched on the closed lid of the toilet.

“You killed him,” Hannibal repeated, something dangerous swimming in the depths of those dead eyes. “And you felt *powerful* . Didn’t you?”

Will heaved, spinning in time just to wrench back the lid of the toilet and emptied his guts. Hannibal smoothed a palm over his back as he vomited, making soft, soothing sounds.

“It’s alright, Will. It’s going to be alright.”

“How?” Will sobbed, his head spinning as he slumped against the porcelain. “How is it going to be fucking alright?! What I’ve done is evil!”

Lips brushed the shell of his ear. “You say it’s evil, but then why did you feel the most in control you ever have done in your life as you wrapped your hands around his throat?”

Will shoved Hannibal away, heaving into the toilet bowl again. He dragged the back of his hand across his mouth, giving Hannibal an ungodly glare as their eyes met again - Hannibal shuddered in delight.

“How do you know how I felt?” Will growled.

“Because I watched you kill him,” Hannibal breathed, voice laden with reverence. “And when you turned around to face me after I called your name, I could see it in your eyes. You’ve never felt such serenity, have you?”

“You watched… you watched what I did to him?”

“I came as soon as I heard the glass shattering. Neither of you noticed me in the doorway.”

“Why didn’t you do something?!” Will spluttered, mouth agape. “You could have stopped him! You could have stopped *me* !”

Hannibal tilted his head to the side, face entirely blank as invisible thoughts and considerations knitted together behind his eyes. “I didn’t intervene because I was curious to see what you would do. Besides; why would I have stepped in when you were so finely in tune with what your instincts were telling you to do?”

“I didn’t want to kill him,” Will insisted, stomach clenching again. “I just wanted to make it stop.”

Hannibal clucked his tongue, shaking his head in disagreement. “You could have stopped after the first blow, Will. That would have been enough to have subdued him. You had him pinned beneath you on the floor. You didn’t want to stop, not until it was well and truly over.”

Will stared blankly at the gleaming tiles before him, the pile of bloody bandages and used antiseptic wipes. “I should call the police. Go down to the station, I…”

“No, you shouldn’t,” Hannibal soothed him gently, leaning forwards to brush his lips over Will’s, not quite a kiss. “Doing bad things to bad people can feel so very good, Will. And Frederick deserved it.”

“He didn’t deserve it,” Will protested weakly. “No one deserves that. How could you have just stood there and *watched* ?”

“I wanted to kill him for everything he did to you that night of the gala at John Hopkins. For the state you appeared in on my doorstep when I saw you after that,” Hannibal told him quietly, eyes fixed on Will. “Watching you be the one to do it though… that was more just. Far more just, and simply beautiful, Will, to see you extracting your justice.”

“How can you say that?” Will spat, face twisted in horror. “I took his life - there is nothing more immoral or - or - fucking reprehensible than what I did!”

“He didn’t even see you as a person, darling. He wore you like an accessory on his arm, used you to enhance his own image. He called you a whole array of vile things. He has hurt you, more than once, for his own pleasure,” Hannibal responded, voice so inexplicably calm. “He deserved everything you did to him. Watching you kill him meant watching you finally realising the magnitude of your self-worth; *that* is what was beautiful. Your rage, your violence… It was magnificent.”

“You’re fucking sick,” Will croaked, closing his eyes. “You’re fucking twisted, Hannibal.”

“The government executed roughly eighteen death row inmates last year. There were over forty-five thousand suicides in the US alone last year too - were those people who took their own lives immoral? Was the government reprehensible for those executions? Was *God* evil when a church roof collapsed on sixty-five grandmothers in Sicily during a mass recently?”

Hannibal countered, kneeling on the floor opposite Will. “Don’t tell me it’s different, Will. Death is death. Typhoid and swans… it all comes from the same place.”

Will opened his eyes slowly. “What am I going to do?”

Hannibal observed him carefully, eyes flickering across his face. “You’re going to get undressed and put everything you are wearing into a refuse sack and give it to me. You’re going to get in the shower and wash thoroughly. Twice. Scrub underneath your fingernails. Then dry off and get into bed, or join me downstairs. The choice is up to you.”

Will looked at him with the slowly dawning horror of realisation seeping across his face. “You’re going to dispose of the body.”

Hannibal *smiled* . “Yes. We can’t leave him there.”

“Someone will find out,” Will swallowed. “We can’t… you can’t just cover up a murder, Hannibal.”

“I promise you Will; nobody will discover what happened here tonight. We just have to be careful.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Is that something you’re really prepared for right now? I don’t want to push you too far.”

Will looked at Hannibal; really, truly, looked at him. Let the snaking tendrils of his empathy caress against the walls of his mind, something he had never allowed himself to do with Hannibal, and felt nothing but purring delight. Sheer adoration. *Pride* .

“You’ve done this before,” Will accused him. “Hannibal… what *are* you?”

Hannibal simply reached for Will’s bandaged hand, tenderly lifting it to his mouth, kissing over the top of Will’s dressing that covered his knuckles. “I’m the only person in this world who is going to help you, Will, no matter what you have done. Come; let’s get you into the shower. I need to dispose of your clothes.”

Will wordlessly let Hannibal pull him to his feet. When his arms failed to rise to begin unbuttoning and pulling and unzipping, Hannibal merely did it for him. Will watched in silence as his suit was placed into a refuse sack, everything he’d adorned himself with tonight from his socks to his cufflinks to his shoes placed inside.

“How pretty,” Hannibal murmured, admiring the sapphires in the vintage Cartier cufflinks. “I’ll endeavour to find you a suitable replacement, mano meilė .”

Will’s mind was numb; blank. So he thoughtlessly asked as he stood there utterly naked:

“What language is that?”

“My mother tongue,” Hannibal answered vaguely. “Lithuanian.”

“What does it mean, what you said just then?”

Hannibal paused, tying the refuse sack with consideration. “It means that you are very dear to me. Special.”

“Even though I’m the reason there’s a dead man in your study?”

Hannibal stepped closer, stroking a hand down Will’s bare ribs and kissing him gently. “Especially because you are the reason there is a dead man in my study.”

Chapter End Notes

There's that bloodshed you were all asking for <3

Can You Find Me Space Inside Your Bleeding Heart

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Passive Aggressive

Hannibal heaved Frederick's body into the basement first. He was a dead weight, but not a weight Hannibal was unfamiliar with. His freezer was thankfully empty after the dinner party, ready to be restocked so soon again thanks to Will.

Hannibal placed him on the gleaming metal table, the restraints not a necessary feature this evening. He sliced Frederick's suit away from him, letting his clothing pile up in the same refuse sack with Will's belongings. Everything would be destroyed in the incinerator; the furnace would burn away the DNA on both sets of clothing from tonight's events.

Once Frederick was fully stripped and naked, Hannibal wasted no time in harvesting what he desired. He needed to work quickly whilst the meat was still fresh and whilst Will was still no doubt having a small crisis in his ensuite, hopefully showering away the blood by now. Hannibal made quick, careful incisions and took Frederick's heart first, keeping his chest cavity open with a rib spreader. He placed the heart carefully into a metal surgical dish, then went for his lungs. They look a little longer, being such large organs. But he pried them free, admiring the way droplets of blood glittered on the gleaming pink flesh as he held them aloft under the stark lights above the operating table. They too were placed in a surgical metal dish, this one much larger.

Hannibal made further incisions, fully opening Frederick up in the classical 'Y' shape of a corpse in the mortuary. He removed his liver next, prodding Frederick's gall bladder out of the way as he did so. It was heavy and dark and shining; Hannibal fought the smile that twitched at his lips. Aware of the fact Will was still upstairs and his time was limited, Hannibal worked as quickly as he could as he next took Frederick's kidneys and intestines. Once he was done, Hannibal vacuum sealed all the organs in plastic packaging and stored them all on individual shelves in the freezer.

Turning back to Frederick's gutted body, Hannibal debated what to do with him. He could be disposed of, or he could be displayed. The artist in Hannibal cried out for the latter, always so desperate to display his work, but Frederick was not his kill. Frederick had not been *planned* . And Hannibal was not fool enough to string a body up out in the open without having thoroughly prepared for it beforehand. No; it was best to store his body for now in the basement and then slowly dispose of him, bit by bit. Make it seem as if Frederick had simply never existed.

They were lucky it was a Friday night; it gave Hannibal the weekend to orchestrate the finer elements of making it seem as though Frederick had vanished before Monday morning, when

alarm bells would begin to ring when he failed to appear for work at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

So for now, Hannibal stored Frederick's body in the refrigerated mortuary cabinet installed in the basement, which would keep him preserved in the meantime. His blood would need to be drained, his teeth extracted and crushed into fine dust, the meat carved from his skeleton and the bones boiled to remove remaining tissue, until they too could be crushed and milled down into a finely pressed powder.

Hannibal shucked his plastic suit off of his body, aware of the fact the floorboards in his study would need cleaning, sanding and then re-varnishing to remove any trace of blood that may be soaking into the wood. He would need to clean the bookshelf Will and Frederick had both touched, remove the fragments of the shattered whiskey tumbler on the floor that hadn't pierced Will's head. But first, there was the issue of Frederick's car. The study would have to wait until later.

Hannibal was making his way across the foyer with a fresh plastic suit when he sensed Will's presence at the top of the stairs. He halted in his tracks, looking up to see Will hovering above him like a wraith, his injured hand gripping the bannister in an iron grip. He was clean, dressed in Hannibal's robe and devoid of blood, but his face was stone-like, unreadable.

"Where are you going?" Will asked, his voice shattering the silence that had been expanding between them in the now deathly quiet halls of Hannibal's home.

"I need to get rid of Frederick's car," Hannibal explained.

"Where are you going to take it?"

"Over the border to Pennsylvania."

Will's jaw tightened, something glimmering in his eyes Hannibal couldn't quite place his finger on. "Let me take it."

Hannibal raised an eyebrow. "May I ask why you're volunteering?"

"Because I've already been in Frederick's car this evening. My DNA is already in there, and even though you have that… *suit* - whatever that plastic thing is - it saves you from running the risk of contaminating his car. Give me something to wear and that plastic suit and I'll do it."

"And if you are stopped by the police?"

"I won't be."

"You can't be sure of that - I mean no offence Will, but I'm more confident in my abilities to deal with any officers that may pull me over."

Will's eyes hardened. "Let me take the car. If I get pulled over, I'll tell them Frederick let me borrow it because he likes to do things like that to impress me, spin them some story about

being his sugar baby. I'll get a slap on the wrist at best for not being a named driver on his insurance and I won't fail a breathalyser test if I have to do one."

"It's believable," Hannibal admitted, although he disliked Will taking the risk.

"Besides, it's going to be far more damaging for you to be pulled over than me; you have so much more to lose than me," Will pointed out, crossing his arms over his chest.

Hannibal walked to a side table in the foyer, drawing out a pen and notepad and scrawling something down on it. "Put these coordinates and this route into the GPS in Chilton's car. It'll keep you off the highways as much as possible to avoid any cameras and take you to a disused farm. Leave the car there with the keys in the ignition and then go left as you walk out from the dirt track."

"And go where?"

"There's a gas station about a twenty minute walk straight down the road. It'll be closed but there's no cameras. I'll be waiting for you there."

Hannibal approached the stairs, treading carefully. He kept his eyes on Will as he closed the distance between them, ascending each step slowly.

"Where's Frederick's body?" Will asked quietly, the harsh look in his eyes as he surveyed Hannibal cutting.

"Dealt with, for now. Safe."

"He's still here."

"In the physical sense, yes."

" *Where* , Hannibal?"

Hannibal paused, sighing. "When this is over and we've dealt with it, I'll show you. No one will find his body - I promise."

Will simply looked at him, tilted his chin upwards to meet Hannibal's eyes directly as the doctor stood before him, inches apart.

"Why are you offering to do this, Will? I appreciate your help, but I can take care of this by myself."

"I killed Frederick in your home, Hannibal," Will answered, breath grazing along Hannibal's cheekbone, their proximity was that close. "The least I can do is help clean up my mess."

"I would rather you stayed here, where you're safe. I'm worried you're going to hit a wall and the weight of this evening's events are going to affect you more than you're prepared for."

Will clenched his jaw. “You’re worried I’m going to panic. That I’m going to freak out and mess this all up. I’m *not* .”

“I believe you, mano meilė,” Hannibal murmured, stroking a finger softly along an errant, damp curl by Will’s ear. “But I’m also aware of the fact this is no easy feat. You were nearly inconsolable about what you’d done a few moments ago when I was tending to your injuries, and I don’t believe that train of thought has simply just vanished. The gravity of this for you is immense.”

“But it’s not for you?” Will asked - it was not a question Hannibal was supposed to answer. It was an accusation. “Because you’ve done this before, haven’t you? You’re well versed in the practicalities of murder.”

“When Frederick’s car has been disposed of and we are safely on our way back to Baltimore, I will answer your questions. And after you’ve learnt what you need to know from me and you wish to leave, to be taken back to your apartment, then I promise you I’ll take you home.”

“Why would I want to do that?”

“Because there’s no guarantee you will like the answers to the questions that you ask.”

Will’s injured hands slid along Hannibal’s wrists, grasping them tightly before joining hands with Hannibal. “If you’re going to be spilling your guts, there’s probably some things I should tell you too whilst we drive back.”

Will drove for three and a half hours. By the time the GPS on Chilton’s car informed him he’d arrived at his destination, it was just gone two in the morning.

Will cringed at the creak of plastic every time he moved. The route Hannibal had told him to take had proven to be safe enough, limiting his time on the highway and keeping him along quiet back roads with very few houses or stores and no cameras. There were no street lights ahead as Will pulled into the dirt track he was just about able to make out in the dark. He kept the headlights off in Chilton’s car too, trying to decrease any sort of visibility.

There was a dilapidated barn ahead of him, nearly collapsing in on itself. The towering black shadows of silos loomed not far behind, overgrown fields and a rusting tractor just about discernable a few yards ahead of Will. Will drove Chilton’s car up to the barn and then circled around the back of it, far away from the view of the road. Will killed the engine, leaving the keys in the ignition just as Hannibal had told him to.

In the dark, Will could vaguely make out an outhouse. Its doors had rotted away, leaving plenty of space for Will to slip inside. After a few minutes of rooting around in the dark, cursing as he stubbed his toe more than once in the shoes Hannibal had let him borrow, Will found an old tarpaulin. He dragged it from the outhouse back to Chilton’s car and threw it over the vehicle, weighing it down a few breezeblocks he found stacked by the barn. Stepping back and squinting to survey his work in the dark, Will was satisfied Chilton’s car

blended in with all the other junk and rusting machinery littered about the farm, completely concealed underneath the tarpaulin.

Before setting off from Hannibal's house, Will had shimmied under the body of the car and scanned for any sort of tracking device Chilton may have installed on the vehicle, checking under the bonnet too. When he found none, he'd donned a pair of Hannibal's leather gloves and the plastic suit, climbing into the driver's side. He didn't want his prints on the steering wheel, and wiping the wheel of any prints would seem even more suspicious if it was ever found.

As Will made his way back to the road, a thick flurry of snow began to descend from the black night sky above him. Will let out a deep exhale, grateful for the snow. It would cover his tracks at the farm, hide his presence with a thick layer of frozen white.

Will's heart was pounding as he paced down the road, heading left. He had no way of contacting Hannibal; they'd both left their cell phones at Hannibal's house, the risk of any movement being tracked if they were to be investigated too great. Frederick's battery on his cell had been dead by the time Will left Hannibal's house, and he'd tossed it over a bridge on the freeway as he'd been going at speed once he'd gotten over the border to Pennsylvania. And so Will began his journey down the empty road, devoid of any starlight, street lights or the headlights from another car. There was nothing; not even the moon could be seen through the thick snow clouds roiling above his head, shedding soft, icy snowflakes onto his skin. Either side of Will was pitch black, nothing but the whispering of forgotten, neglected barley fields for as far as the eye could see - which was not very far at all in the dim night.

Will began to shiver as the gas station appeared in view. The cold was seeping into his bones, his breath curling out like smoke before him. There was a single street light, the first Will had seen for hours, erected by the gas station. The gas station was deserted, empty and blackened, not a single light on anywhere.

Will's heart seized in his chest; what if Hannibal wasn't here? What if he'd lied to Will? Could he have sent Will away out to the middle of nowhere with no intention of coming to get him? What if he had sent Will out here and called the police and there were going to be officers descending on him at any moment now?

Will forced himself to keep walking.

An engine rumbled to life in the dark as Will got nearer to the gas station, and a worn out looking Toyota sedan emerged from the shadows. It drew closer to Will, and the window rolled down. The tight ball in Will's chest started to unravel as he saw those gleaming amber eyes in the dark, devastating cheekbones and ashy blonde hair. Will wordlessly crossed over to the passenger side, sliding into the car with a shivering breath, appreciating the warmth coming from the heaters.

Hannibal said nothing, merely observing Will.

"This your weekend car or something?" Will tried to joke lightly, refusing to look at the doctor.

“It was safer to travel in this car,” Hannibal supplied, still not making a move to begin driving.

“Can we go?” Will pleaded, closing his eyes. “Please?”

Hannibal said nothing, merely pulling the car out back onto the road and beginning to drive. About five minutes passed before either one of them spoke again.

“Did everything go alright?”

“It did,” Will answered. “No cops, no cameras, threw his cell over a bridge on the freeway as I crossed the state line like we agreed. I left his car round the back of the barn on that farm and covered it with tarpaulin and bricks. The snow should cover up any sign of movement or that I was there.”

“We’re fortunate to have the snow this evening,” Hannibal noted, voice sounding far away and distant.

“I thought you might have lied to me,” Will told him quietly. “I had a moment when I started to approach that gas station where I thought maybe you weren’t coming, that you never had any intentions of being there waiting for me.”

“I wouldn’t have done that to you, Will,” Hannibal assured him.

Silence fell in the car again and Will felt like he could cut through the air with a knife, the tension grew so thick.

“Do you wish to ask me what you want to know, or shall I start?” Hannibal said eventually.

There were still no streetlights. Still no moon, no stars. Just the snow and the black clouds above them, casting the car into near pitch black darkness.

“Do you intend to be truthful about everything? To not lie?”

“I do. I have always tried to be honest with you, Will.”

“I would prefer sins of omission to outright lies, Doctor Lecter.”

Hannibal’s lips twitched into a smile. “Ask away, Will.”

Will took a deep breath. “When was the first time you killed someone?”

“When I was a young man, in Paris,” Hannibal answered straight away, not missing a beat. “I’d just left boarding school and had a long summer ahead of me. The urges and thoughts cloistering in my head finally got too much, my curiosity too large.”

“Why did you do it?”

Will was amazed at how calm he managed to sound, at how the confession did little other than send a grimace across his face.

“Because he had been incredibly rude to me. Vile, throughout my whole time at boarding school.”

“Why did he not like you? I can’t imagine anyone not being won over by how frustratingly charming you can be,” Will quipped.

Hannibal smiled, but it didn’t reach his eyes. “Because when I arrived at boarding school I was virtually mute. He found this incredibly entertaining and decided to make a point of ridiculing me over it for the remainder of my time there.”

“You were mute? Why?”

Hannibal drew a deep breath, unsure if Will - or he himself - was ready for this story. But he had told Will he would be truthful, and he did not intend to go back on his promise.

“When I was a child, my sister and I were orphaned at a very young age. The… political climate at the time in Lithuania was hostile, to say the least. My parents were from a long line of Lithuanian and Italian aristocracy, which caused them to be the target of animosity from certain groups. I won’t go into the details of it all, but they were murdered. My sister and I were held captive for months by the group of men who had killed our parents, and they eventually took her life too.”

Will stared at him, mouth falling open, but no sounds came out.

“I managed to get away, was found wandering in the forest near our home and was taken to an orphanage. I’d gone mute by that point, unable and unwilling to talk. I was there for years, until I was sixteen, by the time my uncle Robertus found me - I often think he would have found me sooner if I’d just been able to talk, to tell someone what had happened. He and his wife adopted me out of a sense of duty, I suppose, but weren’t equipped for the reality of housing a teenager who could barely talk - so they enrolled me in boarding school. My mutism still had a hold on me whilst I was there, but I slowly regained my grip over my mind.”

“How old was your sister?” Will breathed, daring to ask the question. “When they… when she died?”

“She was five.”

Will gripped Hannibal’s knee across the console of the car, staring hard at the side of the other man’s face as he gazed out at the open, dim road ahead of them, shadowed by the falling snow.

“You don’t need to apologise, Will, if that’s what you’re about to say next,” Hannibal murmured. “There is not much you can say, not much anyone can say.”

“It shouldn’t… it shouldn’t have been like that,” Will stammered out clumsily, unable to find the right thing to say. “That should never have happened to you.”

“No, it shouldn’t have.”

“What happened after you killed that man in Paris?”

“I developed… a taste, shall we say,” Hannibal answered slowly. “He was the first of many. After my time at medical school in France, I moved to Italy. My mother had no family left there that I knew of, but I wanted to be amongst the people and culture she’d grown up with. My appetite only grew from there.”

“You killed for pleasure.”

“For art. I rendered death into my craft, painted with entrails and sculpted with limbs and bones.”

“How many have there been, Hannibal?”

“Countless,” Hannibal exhaled slowly, blinking.

“You… you displayed the bodies. Afterwards,” Will carried on, frowning out at the falling snow in the dark. “Didn’t you?”

“My first effigy paid homage to Botticelli’s *Primavera* ,” Hannibal said quietly. “Every day I would visit the Uffizi and sit before that painting. I was… enthralled by it. I recreated the section of the painting which depicts Zephyrus, the personification of the winds of the West, and the nymph Chloris using the bodies of a young couple. It was sloppy, but it was my first public piece of work.”

“You don’t see yourself as a killer. You think you’re an artist, elevating those lesser than you into something ethereal. Something more than they ever deserved in life and were only worthy of, by *your* hand, in death.”

Hannibal’s smile broadened. “How clearly you see me, mano meilė.”

“And how do *you* see me? Another piece of the picture you’ll paint when you tire of me?” Will asked darkly, jaw clenched. “Another display you’ll create one day?”

“I see you as the mongoose I want under the house when the snakes slither by.”

Something stirred deep within Will, unfurling from his stomach all the way up his oesophagus and into his throat. “What are you going to do with Frederick?”

“Nothing; he was yours. It’s not my decision what to do with his body.”

Hannibal left out the fact he had harvested the organs already; Will *had* said he preferred sins of omission, after all.

“I don’t want him to be displayed. I don’t want his body to ever be found.”

“Then I will remove him, slowly, piece by piece until there’s nothing left of him. Not even a tooth to be found.”

“I want to ask you how you’re going to do that. But I also don’t know if it’s something I should know, for the sake of my own self-preservation.”

“I’ll answer anything you ask me, Will.”

Will went quiet, and Hannibal could not fathom for the life of him what Will was going to say next, what words would come from his mouth. It was part of what made Will Graham so addictive - Hannibal could read other people, predict their actions so easily. But never with Will.

“If I asked you to help me kill someone, would you do it?” Will murmured.

The snowfall thickened outside somehow, almost Armageddon like in its flurry. The first sign of streetlights in the distance began to appear.

“I don’t believe you need my assistance in such matters,” Hannibal answered slowly. “You proved that all by yourself this evening.”

Will turned and looked at him. “I know what you crave Hannibal; what you’ve been miserably searching for your entire life as you wander from A to Z. You want to be seen, to be understood. And what is it to be seen, if not to see a mirror held up to your eyes when you gaze upon another?”

Hannibal flashed him a look, startled by the observation, before turning his eyes back onto the road.

“You and I, we’re identically different. You’ve given me a gift nobody else has ever received; everything you’ve done tonight, everything you’re still willing to do - you let me know you, *see* you. I’m not going to run away from that gift. I’m offering you back my own gift in return; a partner to create your tableaus alongside you.”

Hannibal looked over at him again, eyes swimming with so many of his own questions, but the hardening of Will’s jaw coupled with the way he dug his fingers into Hannibal’s thigh made him remain silent.

“I need to tell you about a man called Jack Crawford. I need to tell you who Matthew is.”

By the time Will was done telling Hannibal his story, they had arrived back in Baltimore. Hannibal’s blood was simmering, but he said nothing of his rage at Will’s story.

Will looked around at the strange, seemingly abandoned and disused warehouse they were in; it was lined with garage door upon garage door, almost like a multi-storey storage unit for cars. There wasn’t a camera in sight, either - Hannibal really did seem to know how to prowl through the dark undetected. Hannibal unlocked one of the garages with a code keyed into a pad mounted by the shutters he stood in front of, revealing the Bentley parked within. Hannibal switched the cars, quickly, the sight of the sun beginning to strain through the snow clouds as the night started to fade making him wince internally. They needed to get home.

There was probably only another hour or two until the world began to wake up, until polite society stirred in their beds and left their abodes.

The drive back to Hannibal's house didn't take too long, and when the pair of them finally trudged inside and the door was locked behind them, Will made a beeline for Hannibal's living room. The room where Hannibal had pressed a glass of cognac into his hand by the fireplace that first night he'd paid for Will's company, where Will had instructed him to sit and wait by himself until he came upstairs to bed him.

Will collapsed onto the couch, groaning in exhaustion.

He looked up to see Hannibal lingering in the doorway, simply watching Will.

"What's wrong?" Will asked, barely able to lift his head, a headache beginning to pulsate at his temples.

Hannibal came closer, stepping into the room until he lowered himself down onto the couch next to Will, pulling the escort's legs over his lap as he stared ahead of him. "I'm not sure if death is what Jack Crawford deserves."

Will frowned. "You think I'm wrong to want to kill him?"

"I think death is too good for him," Hannibal uttered, voice eerily still and flat. "What he did to you, Will…"

"I don't want to make his death quick and painless, Hannibal."

"He doesn't deserve such a thing," Hannibal snarled. "It… not many things in this world scare me. But it terrifies me to think about what would have happened to you if it hadn't been for Matthew helping you escape."

Will sat up, wincing; he was aching in places he didn't think possible. "Killing Jack isn't just about making him pay for what he did to me. It's about what he's done to Matthew too, about what he can *still* do to him. It's about making sure the only person who ever cared for me, who ever helped me, never has to have that threat hanging over their head ever again. It makes me sick to think that Matthew doesn't know his life is in danger with every month that goes by and I struggle to scrape together the money to pay back my debt to Crawford."

"All those years you paid Crawford, every month, when you first arrived in Baltimore and before Elijah found you… how did you do it?" Hannibal asked wearily, unsure he wanted to know the answer.

Will tensed. "I… I couldn't manage to pay him more than fifty dollars a month most of the time. That first year I was in Baltimore, I only managed to pay off a little over six hundred dollars of the fifty grand I actually owed him. I did *everything* I could to scrape that money together. I would drag myself out of whatever shithole I'd found to stay in that night and no matter how sick, how tired I was, I made myself stand on street corners, truck stops, bars… I had to keep myself high most of the time so I didn't have to face the reality of what I'd done. What I let johns do to me."

Will took a deep breath and tipped his head back. “Most of what I did during those years was no better than what Jack did to me when he kept me in my bedroom and whored me out. It’s a fucking miracle I’m still here to tell the tale after what I let myself become during those first three years in Baltimore.”

“I wish I could have been there to stop him, Will,” Hannibal murmured. “The thought of him keeping you in a room, letting strangers in and out all day to assault you… he deserves to be peeled apart, piece by piece.”

Will smiled bitterly. “When it first began, he was charging sixty dollars for me to be fucked. By the time Matthew got me out, he was charging fifteen. Fifteen fucking bucks to have my body *violated*, hour after hour, just so he could make his fucking point about how worthless I was. About how I little I was barely worth, if he could so easily find that many people, day after day, who were willing to pay *that much* to fuck me.”

Hannibal’s grip on Will’s legs in his lap tightened. “How much do you still owe him?”

“Twenty grand,” Will answered quietly, exhaustion sinking its claws into his bones. “A few more years and I reckon I could have paid him off.”

“That night that you propositioned me to be your only client… if you had told me then, Will, about Jack and the money you had to pay him every month, I would have given it all to you in a heartbeat, every dollar that you owed him,” Hannibal murmured. “But now you’re going to kill Jack instead.”

Will closed his eyes and smiled. “Yes. Yes I am.”

I Know You Want The Sin Without The Sinner

Chapter Notes

Placebo - I Know

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal had guided Will up to bed from the couch as the sun began to rise, shouldering most of the boy's weight. Will was half dead on his feet, exhaustion pulling him to the ground. Will was virtually unconscious by the time Hannibal peeled his clothes from him and laid him down in bed, pulling the sheets over him. He'd left Will there to quickly shower before joining him, the pang of blood curling around his nostrils. When he returned, Will was in a deep sleep, looking pale and fragile in Hannibal's bed.

Hannibal slipped in beside him, thankful for the blackout curtains that shut out the creeping rays of sun. In the dark, he observed how young Will looked as he slept, unguarded and vulnerable in the way only sleep could afford. Will walked around day to day with every shield up, every wall constructed so carefully. Every word, every interaction was a carefully considered game, a ploy to manipulate and tease and coax those around him. Will had survived such cruelty, such brutality, through the avenues his sharp mind provided him.

Hannibal had let himself imagine it more often than he wanted to; Will, as a shivering, washed out twenty-one year old freshly landed in Baltimore plying sweet words and enticing looks to whatever john had pulled up to him on the street corner, leaning into their car through the rolled down window. Will, creeping his fingertips over the wrist of bored housewives looking for a thrill, letting them smoulder under his gaze as he ran a hand up a bare leg underneath a restaurant table. Will, virtually draped across the lap of an adulterous businessman as he whispered filth into his ear, playing with the man as if he were putty in his hands.

And now that he knew of it, he imagined Will, nineteen and so tender, writhing on a bed. Sweat slicking his skin underneath the artificial lighting staged around him, camera lenses capturing every twitch of his cock, every bite of his lip, the way his belly would have heaved with gasping breaths.

He knew there would be little to no footage left of Will on any seedy websites after he had paid off those two men to erase as much as they could, but Hannibal *was* curious as to what some of Will's pornography would have looked like. How similar he would have been whilst he was acting compared to how he was with Hannibal. And yet… Hannibal *knew* every time they had had sex Will had given him an unfiltered, raw version of himself that he'd never given to anyone else before. That Hannibal made the escort feel things nobody else had ever made him feel - partly because Hannibal was particularly well versed in the giving and

receiving of pleasure, but mostly because there was an undeniable connection between the two of them that burned and flayed with electricity, as strong as tungsten.

And that connection only seemed to have solidified into every nerve, every cell, every fibre of Hannibal's being after last night. Hannibal knew, looking down at the man who slept so soundly, so deeply, that he was in love with Will Graham. Knew he had loved him from the moment Will had sneered that he didn't find Hannibal that interesting in the bathroom of the opera house, knew that he loved him from the way he had kissed Hannibal in the cold, crowded against the brick wall outside of the bar they'd bumped into each other in. Hannibal knew he loved Will as he had trembled and gasped in his arms as he rode Hannibal into the bed. He knew that he loved Will Graham from the way the younger man had verbally torn strips off of him, time and time again, because he *could* , because there was a caged beast snarling and pacing within Will, so akin to his own. Hannibal knew that he loved him when he'd caressed his hand over the bizarre collection of books Will kept in his barren little bedroom, when he'd gazed at the faded polaroid of a teenage Will on the day of his graduation, skin warmed and tanned from the Louisiana sun. Hannibal *knew* he loved Will when he'd watched him wrap his bloody, injured hands around Frederick Chilton's neck and strangle him until his body went limp and the sickening, wet breaths stopped squelching from Frederick's mouth.

Oh, the look that had been in Will's eyes when he'd turned to face Hannibal, straddling Frederick's body and gazing back at Hannibal with those startlingly blue eyes - it truly had felt as if there was a mirror held up to him, as Will had said. Everything he saw in Will's eyes was how he felt when he himself took the life of another. The peace, the surge of pleasure, the pure serenity and the *power* … Hannibal had never seen anything so simply perfect. So utterly, infallibly flawless.

Will Graham was truly the most beautiful gift the universe had ever given him. And Hannibal would be a fool to not cherish that gift with his life.

Every ounce of his being, every shred of love that Hannibal could muster, he would give it Will.

Will awoke to an empty bed, the spot where Hannibal had been still slightly warm when he grazed his hand over it. He stretched, groaning at the popping of joints, the wave of dizziness that washed over his brain as he did so, before collapsing back into Hannibal's ridiculously comfortable bed. Of course the man would sleep in a bed *this* comfortable, Will thought to himself with a roll of his eyes.

Will had had more than a few solitary moments last night to piece together what had happened. When he'd stood in Hannibal's shower, scrubbing the blood away and watching as it slithered down the plug hole with the soap, Will had cried. Silent tears that split him apart with the gravity of what he'd done. But then as the water continued to fall on him, the steam fogging over the glass in Hannibal's ensuite, Will had steeled something inside of him. Whilst he'd been driving Frederick's car to Pennsylvania, those hours spent in solitude, he'd realised how little remorse he felt. That initial horror and shame that had burst from him as Hannibal had tended to his injuries had been shock - Will felt a twinge of something

uncomfortable still, but it had been so massively outweighed by the satisfaction of having ripped Chilton's life away from him for treating him like dirt. Like he was *nothing* .

And it had been during that solitary drive to Pennsylvania that Will had realised exactly who else deserved to meet the same end as Frederick. Jack Crawford was the reason why every day for the last eight years Will's life had been a living hell; he wasn't going to live in that hell anymore.

He was going to rectify every wrong. Jack would suffer for every bag of drugs he'd encouraged Will to take with that knowing *smirk* on his face. For every shoot he'd dragged him to, exploited him for, as he watched from the side-lines as Will gagged and spluttered and whored himself in front of a camera. For every blow, every bruise he'd inflicted upon Will. Every fucking dime he'd kept from Will, every mocking grin he'd given Will as he lay aching on his bed whilst he counted the money in front of Will as he whored him out to strangers. For every person who had paid Jack to fuck Will, who'd held him down on his bed and desecrated him, taking and using as they saw fit.

But most of all, Jack was going to pay for the threat he'd placed on Matthew's life, for using Will's only friend as if he were canon-fodder in the game he and Jack were twisted up in. Will had never been loyal to anyone or anything, except for Matthew - Jack was going to find out the hard way just how deeply that loyalty ran.

The sound of movement in the kitchen downstairs tore Will from his thoughts, blinking rapidly as he sat up again. Loyalty… was that what he felt to Hannibal now too?

After last night, Will didn't know what to think or feel when it came to Hannibal Lecter. The man was a monster; everything that he'd confessed to Will last night should have made Will's blood run cold, should have sent him running. But it hadn't; Will realised that he had only felt *seen* as Hannibal shared his truth, felt nourished at the thought of someone else being just as damnable and sinister as Will after what he'd done to Frederick. After what he was going to do to Jack Crawford.

Whether it was loyalty he felt to Hannibal or not, Will couldn't quite place it, which perplexed him. He was always so overly aware of what he felt, how everything he ever encountered made him feel such depths. Perhaps it was loyalty, but not loyalty alone. It felt more akin to obsession, to need; Will had tried desperately to sever himself from Hannibal when he'd realised he wasn't worthy of Hannibal, but after he'd locked eyes with the man as he'd stood on his doorstep last night after arriving to Hannibal's home with Chilton, Will didn't care anymore. Didn't care how little he deserved the devotion Hannibal was so obviously willing to offer him, to give him everything he needed. Will *wanted* Hannibal in ways he had never wanted anything in his life, and Will would be damned if he denied himself for a moment longer after a lifetime of abstaining from ever wanting a single thing. Hannibal had looked at him with pure amazement and adoration when he'd killed Chilton.

Who else could he possibly coexist with, who else could he possibly belong with if not Hannibal? Hannibal saw every part of him and delighted in it, wanting it excessively. Who was Will to deny him that when Hannibal was like a salve to every laceration Will had borne on his soul for so many years?

Hannibal stopped in his tracks as he heard the music; it drifted to him like the outstretched hand of a lover, beckoning him to bed.

He set the knife down on the cutting board before him, breakfast ingredients abandoned on the counter, his feet carrying him to the parlour as if he was in a trance. He reached the doorway, pushing the ajar door fully open, and his ears were bathed in the sounds that Will Graham was pulling from his harpsichord.

Chopin's *Preludes, Op. 28: No.4* filled the air of Hannibal's home, haunting and sweet in the most painful way. Will's hands caressed the keys of the harpsichord so carefully, so precisely, as if the instrument was an extension of Will's body. The song was not intended for the harpsichord, and yet Will made it sound as if it were just so. Darker, deeper than the song was meant to be and yet just as heart wrenching as Chopin had intended the piece to sound.

Will's shoulders stiffened as he came to the end of the short piece, turning and looking at Hannibal.

His eyes fell on Hannibal, who stood there with a light shining in his eyes that Will had only ever seen a handful of times; one of those times being when he'd straddled Chilton's corpse below him, blood oozing across his face from the glass Chilton had smashed against his head.

"Please, don't stop," Hannibal pleaded gently, his voice so soft.

"I… I'm sorry, I should have asked permission if I could play before - "

"Please, Will. Keep playing."

Will sucked in a sharp breath, turning away from the older man and away from the burning in his eyes that caused Will's heartbeat to throb in his ears like the crashing of a wave. His bandaged hands trembled as they hovered above the keys, his skin flushing with heat.

But he put his fingers back to the keys and played, because Hannibal had wanted him to.

Hannibal's face stretched into a slow smile at the sound of another Chopin, coming to life underneath Will's hands, this time *Étude Op. 25, No. 1* , the composition of rapid arpeggios and harmonic modulations coming to life under Will's fingers. He played like he was making love, like he was pouring himself into every note. Hannibal moved further into the room, hungry for the sight of Will, for the music he played. He hovered to the side of the harpsichord from where he could see Will's hands working, the flutter and caress of his fingers over the keys. He was magnificent.

The boy who'd taught himself to master such stirring music, all by himself at the piano his mother had left behind when she'd abandoned Will with nothing but a battered paperback copy of Chopin sheet music.

Will's fingers came to a rest, floating above the keys as he turned and faced Hannibal with heavy lids and uncertainty flitting across his face, as if he wasn't sure Hannibal was pleased. As if Hannibal could be anything but.

He couldn't help himself; he reached for Will and pulled the younger man into a searing kiss, desperate and needy for Will's touch. To feel those same fingers that had caressed the keys of his harpsichord cording through the short, ashy strands of his hair was heavenly - those same hands that had forced the life out of a man on the floor of his study not even twenty four hours ago. What a cunning boy Will Graham was. He curled himself over Will, keeping him flush against Hannibal's body where he'd pulled him from the stool at the keys of the instrument.

"Hannibal," Will gasped against his mouth.

Hannibal held him tighter, his tongue sweeping over Will's mouth as the boy allowed him entrance, caressing the roof of Will's mouth, his teeth, his own tongue. Will shuddered in his arms, his injured hands falling to the hem of Hannibal's loose cotton shirt and skirting underneath, savouring the warm skin taut over firm bones and muscle. Hannibal hummed at the sensation, relishing the graze of Will's bandaged hands stroking over his torso.

He turned Will, pressing him against the side of the harpsichord, his back digging into the instrument. Will bit down on Hannibal's lower lip, the tang of coppery blood bursting across both of their taste buds. Hannibal wanted to drink Will down whole.

Their hands roamed everywhere, pulling hair, squeezing throats, caressing ribs. Their hips rubbed against each other's, Hannibal's thin pyjama pants against the robe of his that Will had donned. His hands almost shook as he pulled at the belt keeping the robe fastened around Will's middle, leaning down and sucking a tender bruise over Will's bare chest from where the robe had fallen away. He grazed his teeth over bump's of Will's ribcage between his pectorals, red marks springing to life beneath his teeth.

"Hannibal, please," Will whispered, hips twitching against Hannibal's.

"Let me take my time with you," Hannibal insisted. "Let me have this, Will; please?"

"God, how - how could I deny you anything?" Will bit out past a groan as Hannibal's fingers pushed his robe away.

The robe slid down his arms, parted down the middle and revealed Will's flushed body, his half-hard cock coming to life between his legs. Hannibal stepped back and simply admired him, eyes travelling down the expanse of skin before him. He slid his thumb across from where it rested on the uninjured side of Will's face, stopping when he pressed his thumb against Will's kiss-bitten lips. Will sucked his thumb into Hannibal's mouth hungrily, eyes flashing with desire.

Hannibal watched, entranced. Will held his gaze, both their chests rising and falling rapidly as Will suckled against Hannibal's thumb, lavished his tongue against it. Hannibal made a sound that was somewhere between a choke and groan, the noise catching in his throat as Will's eyes bore into his own and slowly, gently buried his teeth into the digit in his mouth. He released it with a *pop* , and Hannibal dragged his thumb back over Will's cheek, wet and hot.

“Turn around,” Hannibal said quietly, something dark and starving suspended in his voice that made Will’s knees weak.

He turned, gradually, kicking aside the robe where it had pooled at his feet. Hannibal’s eyes greedily drank in the way the muscles in Will’s back contorted as he turned, the way his shoulders hitched as he reached forwards and gripped the edge of the harpsichord. It was like watching lightning snake underneath marble, coiling and surging in small movements. Hannibal stepped closer until there were inches between them, until he could feel the heat radiating from Will’s skin.

Lips brushed Will’s ear, a hand ghosting over his hip as Hannibal lowered his voice and murmured.

“Bend over.”

Will keened, distraught at the power Hannibal’s voice had over him; it felt like the man could make him implode on the spot just from whispering down his ear. Will lent forwards until his chest touched the closed lid of the harpsichord, bracing his arms in front of himself, wincing at the sting of the cold surface on his warm chest and stomach.

Hannibal grinned at the slight flinch, skimming his palms down the planes of Will’s muscled back.

“Good boy,” Hannibal praised him fondly, watching as Will’s eyes slipped shut.

He stepped back, admiring Will once more. His limbs trembled slightly from the position he’d lowered himself into, his body rising and falling with the soft huffs of breath that fogged the gleaming black lid of the harpsichord on the side Will had turned his head to. Hannibal seared the image into his memory, mounting it on the walls of his mind palace in a room that was entirely dedicated to Will. Those walls were rapidly becoming more crowded.

“I wish you could see yourself,” Hannibal murmured, reaching forwards to caress a fingertip over the bumps of Will’s spine. “Maybe I should draw you like this, spread and prone for me.”

Will bit his lip. “I’d rather you touched me.”

“Oh?” Hannibal smiled in response, splaying his palm out flat between Will’s shoulder blades and pressing him down on the lid of the harpsichord. “Like this?”

“You know how I want you to touch me,” Will muttered, turning to press his burning forehead into the cold lid of the harpsichord.

“You’ll have to tell me, sweet boy. Ask for what you want,” Hannibal mouthed against his shoulder blade as he spread himself over the back of Will. “Use your words.”

“Lower,” Will groaned. “Much lower.”

Hannibal’s free hand clutched his hip, the other trailing down Will’s spine lovingly. “How much lower, Will? Be precise.”

“Lower,” Will gritted out past clenched teeth, shifting beneath Hannibal but finding himself trapped, pinned by Hannibal’s bodyweight. It was dizzying.

Hannibal’s hand stopped at his tailbone. “How about now?”

“More,” Will demanded, breath quickening as his hands curled into fists on the lid, fingernails stabbing into the heels of his hands.

Hannibal’s fingers ghosted over his perineum, pressing down in irregular strokes that had Will panting. Then he pressed the pads of his index and middle finger flat against his perineum, massaging in a slow, torturous circle. Will moaned, his face scrunching up and his toes curling.

“Such lovely sounds you make for me,” Hannibal sighed adoringly, stroking Will’s hip with his free hand. “Your body responds like an instrument being played.”

“Hannibal, please,” Will begged, unsure of what he was actually asking him for.

“I’ll give you what you want, Will. You just have to ask me.”

God, he was so hard. He was leaking all over the polished, gleaming tiles of Hannibal’s parlour, beads of sweat running down his skin.

“Fuck me,” Will gasped, twisting beneath Hannibal. “I want you to fuck me, *please* .”

“Here?” Hannibal whispered, pressing the pad of his thumb over Will’s fluttering hole.

“ *Yes* ,” Will hissed, trembling. “Please…”

“Please what, Will?”

“Please Daddy,” Will whimpered, hiding his face against the harpsichord.

“Are you going to be good for me?” Hannibal murmured, his thumb still teasing around Will’s rim, fingers still massaging his perineum. “I still want to take my time with you. Take you apart slowly until you’re not sure where you end and I begin.”

“ *God* , yes,” Will cried. “I want that, I want that so much, *please* .”

Hannibal had sunk to his knees, spread Will’s cheeks and was eating him out before Will could even process it, sinking so fluidly to kneel behind Will and lavish his tongue at his entrance.

Will groaned at the way Hannibal’s tongue speared him open, alternating between sucking kisses as if he were kissing Will’s mouth and broad, firm licks of his tongue flat against Will’s hole. He feasted on Will like a man starving, savouring each gasp and moan that spilled from Will’s mouth as he held him open and ruined him with his tongue. His fingers briefly returned to keep massaging Will’s perineum as he fucked him with his tongue before going back to holding Will apart and stretching his cheeks so he could bury his face at Will’s core. Hannibal pulled back, stretching Will’s cheeks far enough that his hole fluttered open,

wet and loosened by his tongue, and Will nearly sobbed as he felt Hannibal hover over the small gape of his entrance and let a thread of spit fall inside of his hole.

“Oh, holy *fuck,”* Will whimpered, shuddering under Hannibal’s touch.

Sharp teeth sank down into the meat of where Will’s thigh met his ass, drawing a startled yelp from the escort. Hannibal grinned.

“Stay there,” Hannibal instructed him, rising to his feet. “Don’t move.”

“Wait!” Will pleaded, turning and searching for Hannibal with wide eyes. “Where are you going?”

“Ssh, sweet thing,” Hannibal soothed him, kissing him hungrily and open mouthed. “I won’t be long, I promise.”

Will shivered the entire time Hannibal was gone, eyes shut tightly, trying to slow his breathing down. His ears pricked at the sound of footsteps returning to the parlour, goose bumps raising on the hairs of his arms when he felt the ghost of heat draw closer as Hannibal was suddenly pressing back against him.

“Lovely boy,” Hannibal sighed gently against the back of Will’s neck, pressing a gentle kiss to his nape. “You’re aching, aren’t you?”

Will nodded, almost whimpering as Hannibal grazed the back of his hand over Will’s cock. Will was pretty sure there was a small puddle of pre-cum forming on the floor underneath the harpsichord by now, he was so hard and *wanting* .

Hannibal had gone quiet, which Will did not trust in the slightest, especially when he couldn’t see what Hannibal was doing behind him. Will jolted forwards in surprise when he felt something drizzle from his tailbone down his crack, Hannibal humming in delight. It felt more slippery than lube, more decadent somehow.

“What’s that?” Will croaked nervously.

“Sweet almond oil,” Hannibal replied, still pouring the liquid.

It had begun to drip down his balls, down the backs of his thighs. “Oh…”

“Just relax for Daddy,” Hannibal hushed him, and the sentence alone was enough to make Will’s cock twitch, his stomach clench and a shiver run up his spine.

It sounded a million times better when it came from Hannibal’s mouth than it did from Will’s, Will had decided.

Hannibal knelt before Will again, kissing the cleft of Will’s thigh where he’d bitten him, purpling teeth marks starting to bloom. He pressed a fingertip to Will’s entrance lazily, unhurried and taking his time, as if that was all they had. He spread the sweet almond oil around, collecting each hitched breath and sigh from Will as he did so. Will was biting his lip to keep quiet, to keep himself from demanding more as Hannibal finally slid his right index

finger straight inside of Will without any resistance at all. He pressed his left index finger down over Will's perineum again, slick with oil.

Will's hole sucked his middle finger right in when Hannibal pressed, the sight so obscene that Hannibal groaned into the back of Will's thigh. He twisted his hand, crooking his fingers inside of Will until he found the soft, fleshy mound he was searching for. He played with it gently, feather light touches at first that had Will stiffening against the harpsichord, and then switched his left index finger for his thumb to rub against the space between Will's balls and his hole.

When Hannibal began to stroke his fingers against Will's prostate in a beckoning, 'come hither' motion whilst he massaged Will's prostate from the outside with his thumb, Will let out a startled keen.

"How does that feel, darling?" Hannibal asked, knowing damn well it was sending Will over the edge.

"Too much," Will choked, squirming against the harpsichord. "It's too… what are you *doing* ?"

"Trying to make you cum," Hannibal responded, voice so gentle and soothing. "You'll be a good boy for me and show me you can come like this, won't you?"

Will whimpered; he'd cum like this before twice in his whole life. Both times had been in a fetish shoot with the same actor, a man whose name he'd forgotten now. Will had been gagged, hogtied with his wrists and ankles bound together behind his back and high as a kite on PCP. He'd been flogged, spanked and slapped before the actor he was working with had fingered him open and abused his prostate, stimulating it until his orgasm had been ripped from him and Will had come untouched. The second video had been much the same.

"I'll try," Will whispered.

"There's my good boy," Hannibal praised him, fingers relentlessly working his prostate.

It was so sweet; nothing like the gut wrenching, overwhelming experience he'd had years ago. Will relaxed into it, savouring each stroke of Hannibal's clever fingers, working in tandem with the thumb that was rubbing circles over his prostate from the outside. The way Hannibal administered his touches was electrifying, so self assured and careful. As if Will was something to be treasured; as if his pleasure was an oasis in a desert and Hannibal wanted to dive in.

The heat in his belly was starting to build, tongues of fire licking across his veins as he trembled. Hannibal's fingers never relented, stroking and teasing and massaging until Will was panting against the harpsichord like he'd just ran a marathon. His cock was dripping, desperate to be touched.

"Please touch me," Will begged against the lid of the harpsichord. "I'm so close, *please* ."

"I know, *mieloji* ," Hannibal soothed him. "You want to cum so badly, don't you?"

“Please,” Will breathed, vision blurring with tears at the tidal wave of pleasure flooding through him. “I’m so fucking close.”

“Take it, Will,” Hannibal breathed against his skin, fingers still stroking against his prostate in that beckoning motion. “You’re nearly there darling, I can feel it. It’s going to feel so good, I promise you.”

Every time; every time they’d fucked Hannibal had reduced Will to a twitching, mindless mess. This was just as agonising as all the other times, except this time it was so *sweet* , so crushingly worshipful that Will’s brain felt like soup. Hannibal’s fingers worked him as if he were something to be idolised and revered, his pleasure the only thing that mattered in the world at that moment. Will knew Hannibal delighted in pushing him, seeing how far he could stretch the lengths of Will’s pleasure before he snapped, how much Will could take. Will devoured every touch and kiss like a famished beast.

Hannibal grinned as Will’s breath began to hitch, his toes curling violently against the marble floor beneath him. His insides were clenching around Hannibal’s fingers as he worked them, sweet almond oil making Will’s hole shine as it fluttered and gaped.

“Oh fuck - oh *fuck* , I’m gonna - ”

Will never finished his sentence, the words spluttering to nothing in his mouth as his orgasm wrenched through him suddenly, taking him by surprise. It was so *different* cumming like this, untouched. Ejaculate oozed onto the floor, white flashing behind Will’s eyes as searing heat coursed through his body, radiating outwards from his core. Will felt like he’d gone blind and deaf for a moment, unable to sense anything but the tidal waves of his orgasm crashing through him.

He would have sunk to the floor if it hadn't been for Hannibal’s arms around his waist, keeping him upright against the lid of the harpsichord. Will came to slowly, realising that Hannibal was speaking, murmuring soft words against his shoulder.

“... beautiful, so beautiful Will,” he was whispering longingly, stroking his hands down Will’s flank, through his hair. “You did so well, darling. It felt nice, didn’t it?”

Will nodded feebly. “I don’t think… *nice* describes it.”

Hannibal smiled lazily, his grin only broadening when he slipped a finger back inside of Will and caused the escort to moan, low and heady.

He brushed over Will’s prostate again.

“Daddy,” Will whimpered, tears slipping past his eyes. “Daddy, please…”

“You asked me to fuck you, remember?” Hannibal reminded him gently. “I’m not done with you yet.”

“Oh God,” Will whispered, groaning into the surface he was sprawled on.

“Come here,” Hannibal murmured softly, pulling Will upright.

Will let himself be half carried, half guided on wobbly legs to the sofa, eased down gently onto his back. Hannibal had shed his clothes at some point, pyjamas discarded somewhere on the floor. He watched as Will's pupils dilated even further as Hannibal slicked his length with sweet almond oil, biting down on his quivering lower lip.

Hannibal rubbed the cock of his head over Will's entrance, admiring the pretty gape as he teased around it. Unable to help himself, he slipped a finger back inside of Will and sought his prostate out immediately, grinning as Will jerked off of the couch with a yelp.

"So sensitive, isn't it?" Hannibal crooned. "I'll be careful with you, darling, I promise."

Will begged Hannibal with his eyes, his words evading him. That finger was still mercilessly stroking his prostate, coaxing Will's cock back to hardness, which he watched with amazement. How was he hard again so soon?

"Look at me," Hannibal commanded, grasping Will's ankles and hooking Will's knees over his shoulders. "Look at Daddy."

Oh fuck - this angle, the way Hannibal had positioned them, he'd be fucking Will so deeply, catching against his prostate with each thrust and sending him over the edge again into that too sweet, too much oblivion. Will whined in the back of his throat, flushing as he barely held Hannibal's gaze.

Hannibal pushed inside slowly; Will was so slick, so stretched open and receptive. He sank inside with one thrust, hissing at the tight clench of Will's walls around him. Hannibal felt as if he'd sunk his body into a slice of heaven. The oil glistened over his cock as he withdrew, fascinated at the sight of his member sliding back and forth so slowly in and out of Will. He braced his hands on either side of Will's head to keep himself upright, and Will greedily drank down the sight of those strong, muscled arms bunching and flexing on either side of him as they bore Hannibal's weight and kept him upright.

From the way Hannibal had folded his body, slung his legs over his shoulders, Will could see Hannibal's cock fucking into him slowly, in and out and in and out. Sheer bliss, pleasure crawling along his skin and burrowing into his mind.

"Look at the way your hole just swallows me down every time," Hannibal cursed, accent thickening in his own pleasure. "You're so sweet, Will. My Will."

Will trembled at Hannibal's words, panting. "Yours… yours, yeah."

"Daddy's good boy, aren't you?" Hannibal growled, stretching forwards and kissing Will roughly. "You take it so fucking well, Will, my God…"

Hannibal's pleasure *overwhelmed* Will; hearing the man swear, seeing him gazing at the way Will's body fluttered open to him as if it was made to do so, the self-control Hannibal wielded so precisely falling apart at the seams… There was nothing better in this world than seeing Hannibal come undone.

Hannibal could feel his own orgasm raising its head, despite the fact he hadn't changed pace or angle at all whilst he'd been fucking Will. He'd lost track of how long he *had* been fucking the escort, the sweet grip of the younger man's insides captivating him in a trance. It was sinful, how good Will felt. The slick sounds of his hole opening and shrinking again and again over Hannibal's cock as he fucked him were pulling him quickly towards the edge.

Hannibal captured Will's mouth in another hungry kiss, keeping their mouths locked together as he began to peak. Will clung to him desperately, hips tilted all the way back with his legs still over Hannibal's broad shoulders. He swallowed the moan Hannibal released into his mouth, feeling the other man's hips stutter against his ass. Warmth flooded Will's insides, Hannibal going stock still as his orgasm gripped him and he emptied himself into Will.

Will kissed his neck fervently, stroked his hair and sweat damp back, trying to memorise the bulge of every muscle, the curve of every bone. Hannibal lowered himself to rest atop of Will, shifting his weight slightly so he didn't crush the younger man. Will would have welcomed it if he had; he couldn't think of anything he wanted more right now than to be buried beneath Hannibal's full body weight.

"How is… how is it so good, every time?" Will rasped into the silence of the parlour. "It's like I'm high."

Hannibal's teeth nipped the skin on his neck playfully. "I take it you enjoyed that."

" *Enjoyed* ?" Will nearly spluttered. "It's like my fucking soul leaves my body every time you make me cum, Hannibal. You're dangerous."

"If only I could keep you in my bed at all times," Hannibal sighed. "I think I'd like that very much."

"You're welcome to," Will murmured, wriggling down to meet Hannibal's eyes. "I won't even charge you for it."

Will grinned, throwing his head back and laughing as Hannibal pounced on him and ravaged his neck with his teeth and kisses for the taunt.

Chapter End Notes

Chopin's Preludes, Op.28: No.4 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDT_gtC5faQ

And Étude Op. 25, No. 1 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPEy1rihaSc

Because in my head Will is as much of a secret classical romantic as I am :))

Heaven In A Tourniquet

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Allergic (To Thoughts of Mother Earth)

Will could feel the uncertainty, the apprehension, rolling off of Hannibal by the bucket load. His shoulders were tensed, his breath held, eyes blank as he gazed back at Will.

“You said you would show me,” Will reminded him. “I need to know for my own peace of mind that no one is accidentally going to stumble across Frederick’s body.”

“And I will show you. But I’m not sure you are ready for the extent of how deeply it runs,” Hannibal replied carefully, the lights from the kitchen making his ashy hair shine.

“The extent of what?”

“The truth. The things you have learnt about me within the last twenty-four hours. I wouldn’t blame you if you had decided you had seen and heard enough for now.”

Will shook his head. “There can be no more hiding, Hannibal. No more secrets, skirting around the truth.”

After their tryst in the parlour, Hannibal had pulled Will back upstairs and into the shower, washing him so carefully it had made Will’s heart ache. The doctor had re-dressed his injuries, lovingly wrapping Will’s knuckles again and re-applying the butterfly strips to the congealed, sticky lesions from where the glass had smashed against his head. Hannibal’s gentleness with him, the way he gazed at Will, had the younger man pushing Hannibal against the wall of his bedroom and sinking to his knees before him. He’d taken Hannibal in mouth and brought him to orgasm for the second time that afternoon whilst Hannibal held Will by his curls and sighed and groaned. Will had felt hazy from the second hand pleasure he drank down from Hannibal, similar to the way he sometimes used to gulp down lungs of second hand smoke from nearby cigarettes, just for the sake of the little wave of nicotine rush it gave him.

Will’s empathy hadn’t untethered the hooks he’d sunk into Hannibal’s mind since their long drive back to Baltimore in the early hours of that morning. The result had been intoxicating; Will freely let himself feel everything that Hannibal did, an overwhelming rush of pleasure and gratification at every turn. It made Will feel freer than he ever had, to let himself bathe in the thoughts and feelings the doctor had with no shame. He never let himself step so fully into anybody’s shoes for fear of losing himself, and yet he found himself gladly tumbling headfirst down the rabbit hole of Hannibal’s mind.

After they'd showered and Will had gotten Hannibal off, his mind feeling nebulous in the best way possible, Hannibal had cooked them a very late breakfast that was pretty much lunch by that point. They'd eaten side by side at Hannibal's kitchen counter, washed and dried the plates standing next to each other at the sink. The domesticity of it all made Will somewhat uneasy, despite how much he simultaneously relished in it.

But then the Frederick Chilton shaped elephant corpse in the room had come reeling back to the forefront of Will's mind.

"There is no turning back now," Hannibal agreed, his eyes resting on Will. "But this is all still very new, Will. Tender. You must understand telling you is one thing, showing you something else entirely."

"You still don't trust me," Will accused him. "How could you be willing to hide his body, cover up his murder and offer to help me kill Crawford but then be apprehensive about showing me where you're keeping Chilton's body?"

"Because I have never shown this side of myself to anyone."

Will stepped forwards, closing the distance between them until he held Hannibal's face in his hands. "Show me. Please - I need you to show me."

Hannibal turned his face into Will's left palm, kissing it gently. "As you wish, Will."

Will stepped back, unsure of what would happen next. What he didn't expect was to watch Hannibal go to the pantry and beckon him inside. He went slowly, following the doctor inside. It looked the exact same as it had last night, when Hannibal had pinned him against the wall and kissed him with such urgency that Will's head had spun, overpowered by Hannibal's hand slinking down his trousers and stroking him greedily before Chilton had discovered them.

Hannibal pushed aside the table placed against the wall and then caught a tiny latch that was invisible to the naked eye along the floorboards, discoverable only by touch. He lifted the hidden trap door, standing and then gesturing to the darkness below.

"Would you like to go first? Or shall I?"

Hannibal surveyed Will as he stood in the basement, taking it all in. He daren't assume a single thought that was going through Will's mind in those moments, as he watched the escort drift from one corner to the next. From the freezer, to the circular saw machine, neatly stacked boxes of clear tubes, rope, syringes and zip locks. He watched Will gaze at the rows of polished scalpels, knives, forceps, scissors and retractors inside of the drawer he'd pulled open at one of the cabinets. Will stared at his own reflection in the bone saw that sat gleaming under the lights in the basement.

Hannibal let him wander to the centre of the basement where the plastic curtains were drawn around the manacles that hung from the ceiling, Will's pale hand stretching forwards to push

aside one of the heavy plastic flaps and looking at the chains, the dip in the floor that led to a drain where countless streams of blood and other bodily fluids had disappeared into.

“Where is he?”

Hannibal’s hands clenched instinctively at his sides before he slowly made his way over to the mortuary cabinet, releasing the clasp on the handle and opening it for Will. Will stayed frozen on the spot as Hannibal pulled the tray forwards from the long, horizontal space within.

Chilton’s body lay lifeless on the slab.

Will’s steps were like the shudder of thunder as he approached; Hannibal’s heart raced.

Hannibal kept his attention on Will, simply continuing to watch him as he took it all in. Will’s eyes travelled over the sickly pale shade of Chilton’s flesh, fixing on the ‘Y’ shaped incision across his chest and down his abdomen.

“You… you took something?” Will asked, his voice barely above a whisper.

“Yes,” Hannibal answered honestly - there was little use in skirting about answers or lying now.

“What did you take?”

Hannibal gestured to the freezer, letting Will go to it and peer inside. Hannibal’s stomach turned at the sight of Will holding Chilton’s frozen liver in his hands, vacuum packed in plastic. Will simply stared for a long, long time. Hannibal felt like he might suffocate on the air in the basement, sweat beginning to bead along his brow and upper lip. He waited for Will to say something, do something… but the younger man simply held the organ in his hands and stared.

“Will?” Hannibal softly called out to him, proceeding to slide Chilton back into the cabinet.

“Don’t.”

“Don’t?”

Will put the liver back into the freezer, closing it gently and then walking back to Hannibal. He gripped his hand over the handle of the tray where Chilton lay, gradually pulling his body back out into view. Will’s face was blank as he peered down at Chilton, his cold flesh still a mottled mess on his face from where Will had beaten him. He was bruised all around the incision where Hannibal had cut him.

“Did you use this kind of meat at your dinner party last night?” Will asked quietly.

“I used a selection of different cuts of meat from a range of different animals,” Hannibal answered carefully. “There was quite a variety.”

Will's lips quirked at the corners, the faintest twitch of a smile. No horror, no disgust. Just the simple flutter of an amused smile.

"What's left to do to him?" Will breathed.

"It depends," Hannibal answered. "It depends on what your intentions are for the body."

"Did you drain him?"

"Not yet. It can still be done, but will need to be done soon."

"Do it now. Show me how."

Hannibal nearly startled. "Is that really what you want?"

Will looked up at Hannibal with a darkness he had not seen before in the younger man's eyes. A darkness so different to the blazing fire and righteousness he'd witnessed in Will when he'd found him in the study after killing Frederick. No, this was cold. Calculated and dangerous.

"When I find Jack Crawford," Will began slowly, "I want to sever his hands from his wrists. I want to remove his tongue and then I want him to watch as I drain him like a pig in a slaughterhouse. So please, Hannibal; show me how you would do it."

Hannibal released the breath he hadn't realised he'd been holding. Then he nodded and pulled Will into a searing kiss, both of them ignoring Chilton's corpse right next to them on the tray.

"What the fuck happened to you?" Elijah spluttered, eyes widening as soon as he saw the injuries on Will's face.

It was Sunday night, and Will had finally left Hannibal's side. Hannibal had shown Will how to string up Chilton's body, explained to him that usually he would use a dialysis machine to drain the blood from a body, but then demonstrated precisely with a scalpel how to administer cuts just deep enough to nick the major arteries in Chilton's neck, thighs and arms. Will would have a choice of where he cut Crawford when he bled him out. Frederick did not bleed as much as Crawford would, a lot of his blood already lost due to Hannibal removing his organs, but the floor beneath Frederick's lifeless body still gushed crimson as he was drained.

"A live body will bleed much quicker," Hannibal murmured, dark eyes watching Will intently. "His heart will still be pumping his blood all around his body, pushing the blood from the incisions much faster. Frederick will be best left strung up overnight to drain properly, seeing as there's nothing forcing his blood out other than gravity."

Will absorbed it all, watching Fredrick's blood drain down the grid below him on the sloped floor. It looked almost black.

"Will?"

Will blinked back to reality, fixing his gaze on Elijah. “I… it didn’t go well with Frederick.”

Will and Hannibal had decided exactly what Will would tell Elijah, the omissions of truth and bare faced lies Will would have to spin. Elijah would no doubt be swept up into a police investigation soon enough, and he needed to be fed very precise lies that would corroborate with what Will and Hannibal would tell the police.

“Jesus Christ,” Elijah muttered. “Come in. You want a drink?”

Will shuffled inside of Elijah’s apartment, doing his best to look defeated and wrung out. He nodded feebly, taking a seat on Elijah’s stupidly big, cream leather couch and accepting the glass of whiskey pushed into his hand.

“Why didn’t you call sooner? What happened?” Elijah demanded, sinking down into a chair opposite Will.

Will gulped a mouthful of whiskey. “Frederick took me to a dinner party.”

“And?”

“It was at Hannibal Lecter’s house,” Will admitted, flinching from the residual dread he’d felt sinking in his stomach as he remembered Chilton turning the car down onto Hannibal’s street. “I wasn’t… I wasn’t entirely truthful when I said I didn’t care about Lecter. I was developing feelings for him, that’s why I cut it off.”

“Fuck’s sake, Will,” Elijah cursed sitting back and sighing. “I’m guessing Frederick clocked on.”

“He may or may not have walked in on me kissing Hannibal,” Will responded. “Obviously he wasn’t pleased.”

Elijah’s eyes fell to the wounds on the side of Will’s head, scabbing over and congealed beneath the butterfly strips Hannibal had lovingly replaced for him that morning before Will had left Hannibal’s home to return to his own apartment.

“I… we went back to the party and pretended like nothing had happened all evening, but Frederick was insisting that we stay after everyone had left and talk it out with Hannibal. Whilst we were waiting for Hannibal to finish seeing off the last of his guests Frederick began arguing with me and then..” Will trailed off, gesturing to the left side of his face where the glass had cut his skin, lodged itself into his scalp, brow and temple.

“What did he do?”

“He smashed a glass against my head,” Will sighed, sinking back into the sofa and closing his eyes. “Hannibal came as soon as he heard the commotion. Managed to pull Frederick off of me. Frederick stormed out, called me for all sorts. I stayed the weekend at Hannibal’s.”

Elijah released a long, slow, breath. “How are you feeling now? Do you need to go get checked out by a doctor?”

Will shook his head, raising his glass to his lips and sipping. “No, I’m fine.”

“Has he contacted you since he left you at Hannibal’s on Friday night?” Elijah asked, frowning. “I haven’t heard anything from him. He’s the kind of guy who would be on the phone straight away, complaining and demanding a refund.”

“Nothing,” Will answered truthfully. “Haven’t heard a peep from him, which is pretty odd. I would have thought he’d be doing the same, hounding you for a refund and telling you what a disgrace of an agency you’re running.”

Elijah grimaced. “Well, maybe it’s for the best. Perhaps he was so embarrassed he’s gone to hide under a rock somewhere and won’t be getting in touch ever again.”

Will smiled wearily. “I hope so.”

Elijah sat very still, giving Will a measured look. “And what about Hannibal?”

“I’m… I’m sorry, Elijah,” Will mumbled. “I know that I violated more than one condition of my contract, but I think I’m going to have consider whether - ”

“Spit it out, Will. Don’t dance about it, you know I don’t appreciate it.”

Will clenched his jaw and looked Elijah in the eyes. “I have feelings for him. Feelings I’ve tried to ignore from the first time I met him. I kissed him before I even had my first date with him, outside of a bar in November. I tried to stay away, tried to ignore how I feel because I *know* it’s no good catching feelings for someone in this line of work.”

“I understand Frederick was an asshole,” Elijah said slowly, drumming his fingers on the seat of the chair he sat in. “But you kissed another person whilst you were on a paid fucking date, Will. Have you slept with Hannibal outside of the times he paid you for it?”

“No,” Will replied meekly, guilt snapping at his insides. “I promise. I… I wanted to, and he did too, but I told him my line of work means no relationships, of any kind.”

“There’s a reason that’s one of the conditions of working for me, Will,” Elijah muttered, swigging his own whiskey. “I’ve seen too many escorts fall for a john, think they’re going to run off into the sunset with Mr. Right, and then they get chewed up and spat back out. You’re smarter than to catch feelings for a client. You know how this goes.”

Will’s eyes prickled with hurt, angry tears at Elijah words, as harsh as they were true. “I know. I know, Elijah. And I never let myself develop feelings for anyone, you know I always kept it professional. It’s only ever been work.”

“But this Lecter guy is different, huh?” Elijah drawled, rolling his eyes.

Will tried to be understanding, tried to brush aside the snide remark and tone of voice. Of course Elijah didn’t know the depths of Hannibal’s devotion for him; and he never would, not if Will had anything to do with it.

“I want to leave,” Will whispered. “Hannibal wants me to leave too.”

Elijah let out a dry, barking laugh. “You’re serious?”

“I’m serious,” Will insisted, as pathetic as it sounded to his own ears. “I won’t deny myself a chance at happiness just because I’m scared it could go wrong. I don’t see why I should be alone anymore.”

Elijah narrowed his eyes. “You’re willing to trust this guy, when you’ve only known him for two months? To believe him when he says he’s going to take care of you, that you won’t want for anything ever again and he’ll always be by your side? The list goes on, Will, the list of lies guys like that feed sex workers. They think you’re a damsel in distress, that they’re gonna save you from a life of misery and give you that meaningful connection. They *don’t* ; I thought you were smart enough to realise that.”

“What the fuck would you know,” Will muttered under his breath, swallowing a mouthful of burning amber liquid.

“What the fuck would I know?” Elijah repeated, eyes widening as he laughed humourlessly. “I know men, Will. I know how they promise you the world, how they want to sweep you off your feet. Do you honestly believe it’s going to work with Lecter? Normal guys like that pretend, and they try, and it lasts for a few months before the reality of what you are and what you’ve done your whole life is too much for them to handle anymore. Then their heads get turned and they leave you high and dry just as quickly as they swept you up.”

“I’m fully aware of that,” Will spat bitterly. “I know that’s what so many men do, what so many of them delude themselves into thinking. Why do you think I’m so good at this job, Elijah? Why do you think I have so many men eating out of the palm of my hand? I’m good at this because I know how to cut off the feelings, but it’s not like *that* with Hannibal, you have to believe me.”

“What is it like then, Will?” Elijah snapped. “Hmm? Is it love?”

“I…” Will’s words failed him, catching in his throat and withering.

Elijah scoffed. “You know love isn’t for people in this line of work, Will.”

“That’s why I want to leave,” Will rebutted, sitting forwards. “So that maybe I can have a *chance* at love. Don’t you think I deserve for someone to fucking love me, Elijah?”

Elijah sighed heavily, running a hand over his face tiredly. “Of course I do, Will. But believe it or not, I care about you. And I don’t want to see you walk away from working for me just to end up back where I found you three years ago after Hannibal decides he’s had his fun with you.”

“I get it,” Will gritted out. “I get that you don’t trust him, or believe me. You don’t know him, why would you? But at least acknowledge the fact I would never do something like this, not unless I thought it was worth the risk. I can’t keep doing this job, Elijah, not when I feel like this for the first time in my life and I know he feels it even more strongly than I do.”

“Why not keep your job, but just do dates with the likes of Ms. Marincic?” Elijah suggested, frowning. “Nice older women who just want company and a few compliments, no more extras and sex. Just dates, nothing more.”

Will smiled sadly, shaking his head. “I’ve got to walk away from it for good.”

“And if you change your mind? If he changes his?”

“I don’t know,” Will admitted quietly, blinking furiously at the tears threatening to spill. “I just know I don’t wanna be lonely anymore.”

Elijah drained the last of his whiskey, shaking his head and sitting in silence for a few minutes. “You can have all of the money Frederick paid for your date. I won’t take my cut from it.”

Will just nodded in thanks and chased the last few drops of his own drink down, savouring the burn as it slid down his throat.

So Bored Of Being Alive

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Lazarus

It was 13:08 pm on the clock when the knock sounded on Will's front door of his apartment. He placed the spatula down he'd been gripping tightly as he stood over the stove, switching off the heat that was frying the fillet of trout in the pan.

He took a deep breath and headed to the front door. He'd been expecting this any day now.

Will fixed his best placating smile onto his face as he opened the door, the one he reserved for clients when they turned up to a date in a foul mood because they'd had a bad day at the office or an argument with their wife.

Two women stood before him, snow melting into their uniforms and coats. One of them was tiny, bird-like with sharp eyes and copper hair that reminded him of Elijah's. Her partner was taller, dull next to the bird-like woman with vibrant hair. She was plain, mousy, and there was a harsh set to her jaw that Will disliked.

"Mr. Graham?" the taller one began.

"That's me, yeah," he smiled politely. "How can I help you, officers?"

"I'm Deputy Lambert and this Detective Sanchez. Is it alright if we come in? We have some questions we need to ask you," the taller one, Deputy Lambert, asked.

"Of course," Will responded, stepping back and gesturing for them to come in, sweeping an arm aside. "Apologies for the smell, I was just cooking trout."

The two women entered and Will ushered them into the small, bare living room, letting them sit down on the sofa whilst he dragged one of the chairs away from the dining table to face them.

"Can I get you anything to drink? Coffee?"

"Thanks, but we're good," Sanchez replied, eyes sweeping over the depressingly plain state of Will's apartment. "We won't be long. Thank you for giving up your time like this, Mr. Graham."

Will brushed it off. "Please, just Will is fine. So, what can I help you with?"

Lambert pulled a notepad from her pocket, clicking a pen to life and leaning forwards a little. “You’re familiar with Doctor Frederick Chilton?”

Will purposely let his smile fall a little bit, let his shoulder curl inwards on himself somewhat, lowering his eyes to the floor. “Yes, I know Doctor Chilton. Has something happened?”

“We’re concerned for his whereabouts,” Sanchez replied, her sharp gaze clocking every move. “He didn’t arrive for work on Monday morning at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. His assistant called his cell numerous times and couldn’t get through and eventually went over to his house to see if he was there but there was no answer. She became worried and called the police, worried he’d collapsed inside of his home and needed medical assistance.”

“Did they find him? Is he alright?”

“There was nobody there,” Lambert answered, still clicking her pen. “Officers searched the property and found his bedroom in a disarray, drawers left open and the closet a mess. Looked like he’d packed a bag and left in a hurry. His car wasn’t at his home and his cell phone is dead.”

Another excursion of Hannibal’s that had been made over the weekend; the older man had slunk out in the middle of the night, leaving Will dreaming in his bed and had discreetly broken in to Frederick’s house, staging the bedroom to look as if Frederick had come home and packed in a rush in order to disappear.

“He’s… so he’s left Baltimore?” Will asked, frowning and pretending to be confused.

“His assistant insisted this was completely out of character for Frederick. That he would never do something like this. She was extremely worried for his well-being.”

“You think I might know where he might have gone?” Will queried, still frowning in feigned confusion.

“His assistant doesn’t believe Frederick would just leave like that. Suspects foul play,” Lambert supplied. “She gave us his diary and itinerary from the last few weeks. You would have been one of the last few people to have seen him, on Friday night at Doctor Lecter’s party. That’s right, isn’t it?”

Will sighed quietly, clasping his hands together on his lap. “I saw Doctor Chilton on Friday night, yes. We had a date.”

Lambert sat back a little on the sofa, gaze measuring Will. “Frederick’s diary contained a cell phone number of your… your manager, Elijah Benowitz. He’d written down your name next to his plans for the party you went to.”

Will nodded slowly, looking up at the two women with a gentle gaze. “I’m not a prostitute, Deputy Lambert. What I do is legal. My clients pay me for dates, nothing more.”

Sanchez cleared her throat. “We’re not here to dig into the specifics of your work, Mr. Graham. We just want to ask about Frederick. The same way we’ll be asking your manager and Doctor Lecter and any other guests who spoke to Frederick that night at the party.”

Will sucked in a deep breath for dramatics, relaxing a little. “Alright. So, what can I help you with? I have no idea where Doctor Chilton is, I’m afraid. I don’t talk with clients outside of dates, you see; my manager oversees all communication with clients and the agency. I just meet them at whatever destination they ask and we don’t speak again unless they want another date.”

“How was Frederick behaving that night at the party?” Lambert asked, pen poised above the notepad.

“He was excited to be there. I only met him once before, on our first date, but from what I can tell he admires Doctor Lecter greatly. He was sociable all night, talking and drinking with all the other guests.”

“You must pay close attention to your client’s mood, their behaviour… was there anything that may have distressed him or any interactions that may have looked a little off?”

“I… well, yes,” Will began to admit, forcing the sheepish tone into his voice. “It was me. I was a little bit distracted that night by Doctor Lecter. You see, Doctor Lecter had paid for two dates with me in-between mine and Doctor Chilton’s first and second date. We got on well, and I hadn’t expected to see him again, so I guess Doctor Chilton noticed me looking at Doctor Lecter a little too often.”

“Did Frederick confront you about the fact you and Doctor Lecter had a history?”

“I’d hardly call it a history, Detective Sanchez,” Will smiled weakly. “We had dinner twice, that was all. And Doctor Chilton had no idea I’d had dinner with Doctor Lecter a few times in between my dates with him - I doubt that he would have wanted to bring me if he knew Doctor Lecter had been on dates with me.”

“Did you know that Frederick was bringing you to a dinner party at Doctor Lecter’s house?”

“I had no idea. I would have asked my manager to give the date to one of the other escorts if I’d known. Conflict of interest, and all.”

“So other than the fact Frederick wasn’t happy about you… looking a little too much at Doctor Lecter, there was nothing else about the evening that would have made him on edge or contributed to the fact he’s missing?”

“Well he - we got into an argument about it, after dinner,” Will lied, chewing his lip. “He’d had quite a lot to drink and he became quite angry at my behaviour. I apologised to him, of course, but he only seemed to become more worked up about it.”

“How’d you get those cuts on the side of your face, Will?” Lambert asked outright, tapping her pan against the notepad.

Will had been wearing turtleneck sweaters all week, anticipating the visit from the police. The sweater covered the gouges left behind from Frederick's nails when he clawed at Will's neck, and the cold January weather did not make his choice of clothing seem strange at all. The healing split skin across the knuckles of his right hand, however, were not quite as easy to hide as the defensive wounds on his neck.

"Doctor Chilton smashed a glass against the side of my head," Will admitted, making himself seem as small and timid as possible. "It was after all of the other guests had left and gone home. We were the last ones there, at Doctor Lecter's home."

"What happened after that?" Sanchez pressed.

"Doctor Lecter had been seeing off the last of the guests at the front door. He came as soon as he heard the commotion."

Sanchez's eyes zeroed in on the healing scabs on Will's knuckles. "You didn't react? Looks like your knuckles got a little roughed up there, Mr. Graham."

"I hit him," Will admitted weakly. "It was self-defence. He'd just glassed me, Detective Sanchez, and I was scared he'd lose his head even more and try to attack me again. It was a knee-jerk reaction."

Sanchez held her hand up, nodding. "It's alright, Will. I'm sure plenty of other people would have done the same if they'd just been assaulted like that."

Will's slump of relief was not entirely acted. "I shouldn't have hit him, I know that. I'm not a violent person, at all, and I regret that I punched him. But I was just scared and…"

"What happened after that?"

"Doctor Lecter came into the room we were in, saw I was bleeding and worked out pretty quickly what happened. He told Frederick he needed to leave, insisted he couldn't stay in his home after he'd just attacked me. I think Frederick was embarrassed, so he stormed out. I don't think he should have been driving, after he'd drank so much, but I was too upset and dazed to think to tell him he needed to get a cab."

"And that was the last you saw of him?" Sanchez hummed, pursing her lips.

Will nodded. "Yes. I haven't seen him since he left Doctor Lecter's house. Doctor Lecter tended to my injuries and we… well, I won't go into details, but I spent the night at Doctor Lecter's."

Lambert's eyebrows raised. "I see."

The image of Chilton's alabaster corpse, stiff and lifeless on the tray in the basement flashed before Will's eyes. Hannibal's hands roaming over Will's skin as he ravaged him with teeth and tongue. The sharp flare of pain against his skull as Chilton had smashed the glass on his head. The way the snow had fallen so thickly in the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere over the border in Pennsylvania.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t tell you more about what might have happened,” Will offered regretfully. “I just… you don’t think he would have left Baltimore because he was so upset about that night, do you?”

“That’s what we’re trying to figure out, Mr. Graham,” Lambert replied, grimacing a little. “If it’s a case of Doctor Chilton simply upping and leaving then it’s none of our concern; he’s entitled to do what he wants with his life. But if it’s foul play, like his assistant from the BSHCI thinks, then it’s a different story.”

“Well, I hope nothing serious has happened to him, and he’s found safe and well - even if it is the case that he has just walked away from his responsibilities.”

Sanchez’s eyes narrowed. “You’re sure that there was no contact with him after he left the party?”

Will shook his head. “None. I was with Doctor Lecter all weekend, he’ll tell you the same. The only people I’ve been around or had contact with since that night are Doctor Lecter and my manager.”

“We believe you, Mr. Graham. You’re not a suspect of anything, this isn’t even a missing persons case. We’re just making sure it doesn’t turn into one.”

“Is there anything else I can do to help?” Will offered, sounding completely sincere despite the sheer lie that it was.

“No, I think that’s everything. Thank you for your time, Mr. Graham,” Sanchez replied, getting to her feet.

Lambert followed, and Will showed them both to the door. As they were leaving, Will forced out:

“I hope all of this gets resolved and Doctor Chilton is okay. Let me know if there’s anything else I can do, really.”

Lambert gave him a grim smile and a nod in thanks. “Thank you, Mr. Graham. We’ll be in touch if something comes up.”

After they’d gone, Will carefully shut the door and slid down the back of it, releasing a long breath and burying his face in his hands. He scraped his fingernails over the sticky scabs on his temple and scalp, fingertips stained red when he pulled his hands back and looked at them.

He grinned.

It was 14:37 pm when the knock on Hannibal’s office door sounded. He slid the scalpel carefully behind his pocket square and rose from his desk.

“Please, take a seat Deputy Lambert, Detective Sanchez,” he smiled smoothly to the two women.

They say on the chaise longue side by side, Lambert pulling out her notepad and pen.

“I’m afraid I have a patient due at three o’clock,” Hannibal informed them. “Would you like to reschedule?”

“We won’t take long, Doctor Lecter,” Lambert replied, eyes sweeping over the rich interior of the office.

A stark difference to the barren, lacklustre apartment they had just been in with Will Graham.

“You said it was about Frederick Chilton? Has something happened?” Hannibal began, settling himself into a nearby chair facing them.

“He appears to have packed a bag and simply vanished from Baltimore. He failed to arrive for work on Monday and the last time anyone saw him was at your party on Friday last week,” Sanchez answered. “Everything suggests that he has simply just abandoned his life here, but his assistant says it’s completely out of character. She suspects there’s foul play.”

“You think someone may have harmed Frederick?”

“Possibly. We’re simply interviewing the people who saw him last, for now,” Lambert responded. “We’ve already spoken to Will Graham.”

“Ah, I see,” Hannibal sighed, crossing one leg over the other. “Will was there at the party on Friday, as Frederick’s plus one. I have also been a client of Will’s in the past, something Frederick was unaware of until that night. He was displeased, to say the least.”

“He attacked Will.”

“He did,” Hannibal replied gravely, schooling his features carefully to show his disapproval. “I was shocked that he would do such a thing.”

“Would you say Frederick is a jealous person? You’ve known him for years, haven’t you?” Sanchez probed.

“Frederick and I were at John Hopkins together. He unfortunately never became a surgeon, as I did, but we both ended up in the field of psychiatry nonetheless. I think Frederick has perhaps never recognized his achievements for what they are, always thinking there was something else he should accomplish. I fear he may have sometimes set the bar at my own personal successes.”

“You think Chilton wanted to be you? Or better than you?”

“I cannot say; it’s not as if he would have confessed it, if he had. All I know is that his temper got the better of him when he realised I had also been a client of Will’s and he assaulted him. I insisted he leave, of course, and have heard nothing of him since Friday night.”

“And Will Graham was with you all evening?” Lambert pushed.

“Yes. We spent the weekend together.”

“Is Will Graham in a relationship with Frederick Chilton?” Sanchez asked suddenly.

Lambert raised an eyebrow at her. Hannibal smiled.

“I don’t believe so, other than the relationship of an individual providing a service to a customer. But by that extent, Frederick is in a relationship of sorts with Will’s manager too. All I know is what Will has told me, which is that Frederick had one date with Will before the date they had at my party on Friday.”

“Do you think Frederick would do something rash like this because he was jealous of you? Jealous of the fact you were also a client of Will’s?” Lambert asked.

“I believe if an individual’s self esteem is low enough, and has been low for a sufficient amount of time, it can drive someone to behave out of character. Sometimes all it takes is one small, seemingly insignificant event to push us over the edge.”

“Was there anyone at the party who Frederick had ever had conflict with before? Someone who may have wanted to harm him?”

“Certainly not,” Hannibal replied, frowning.

“But Will Graham punched him,” Lambert pointed out.

“Because Frederick had smashed a glass against the side of his head. Will was lucky Frederick’s aim didn’t catch any further round the side of Will’s face - the glass could have caused a severe injury if it had gotten into Will’s eyes.”

“Would you say that that was typical behaviour for Frederick? To become violent like that?” Sanchez asked, eyes flickering to the clock nearby.

They would have to leave soon.

“I believe Frederick saw Will as being below him, lesser than him, based on the way I observed him interact with Will. It wouldn’t surprise me if Frederick thought he was entitled to treat Will so poorly, seeing as he had paid for his company that evening. But no, I don’t think Frederick’s behaviour is typically violent, but I cannot attest for what goes on behind closed doors.”

“Alright,” Sanchez replied, nodding. “Thank you for your time, Doctor Lecter. We’ll see ourselves out.”

“Of course; I do hope Doctor Chilton is found safe as soon as possible.”

It was 15:23 pm when the intercom buzzed in Elijah’s apartment. He hauled himself away from his desk to answer it.

“Yeah?” he spoke gruffly down the line, rubbing his tired eyes.

“Elijah Benowitz?”

“That’s me, yeah.”

“We’re with the Baltimore Police Department, sir. May we come up? We need to ask a few questions.”

Elijah’s back stiffened. “What’s it about?”

“It’s about one of your customers, Mr. Benowitz, a Doctor Frederick Chilton?”

Elijah hesitated and then pressed the button on the intercom to let them in. A few minutes later, there was a knock at the door and Elijah let the two women into his apartment, introductions made as they entered. They settled themselves on the cream leather of his sofa that took up the majority of the space in his vast, city view living room with its floor-to-ceiling windows.

Elijah sat down opposite them in the armchair. “Alright then. How can I help?”

“Your… employee, Will Graham, was paid by Frederick to attend a dinner party at the home of a colleague of Frederick’s on Friday night last week,” Sanchez began. “He hasn’t been seen since. His assistant at the BSHCI suspects something has happened to him.”

“He’s just disappeared?”

“There’s evidence to suggest he has left Baltimore. We searched his home and found his dresser and closet in a mess and no suitcase in the house, so it seems as though he has gone somewhere.”

“So… so what’s the problem? People have midlife crises all the time, breakdowns. Someone like Chilton, I’m not surprised he had enough and just up and left.”

Lambert jotted something down on her notepad. “His assistant at the BSHCI disagrees. She thinks something has happened to Frederick because he would never do something like this.”

“Like what? What else could have happened to him?”

“That’s what we’re trying to find out. We’re interviewing the people who last had any contact with him. It may well be that Frederick has just decided to leave state, but we need to double check.”

“Uh-huh,” Elijah replied flatly, biting his tongue to stop himself from asking whether everyone got this treatment, or whether it was just wealthy assholes in positions of power. “Well, he’s not contacted me since he got in touch and asked if he could hire Will for a date. That’s about all I can tell you, I’m afraid.”

Sanchez and Lambert toiled through, asking him the same kind of questions they’d asked Will and Hannibal and receiving pretty much the same answers, albeit in a more surly, tired manner than their two previous interviews.

“As far as I’m concerned, Frederick should be charged with assault when you find him,” Elijah finished off, crossing his arms over his chest. “He had no right whatsoever to lay his hands on Will like that, and I *know* Will hit him back, but that was self-defence.”

“Well, that’s up to Mr. Graham to press charges if that’s what he wants to do,” Lambert responded, tucking her notepad away.

The two women rose to their feet and Elijah walked them to the door.

“I’m serious; he can’t just go around attacking people like that,” Elijah muttered. “So much for civilised behaviour, huh?”

“Perhaps you should speak to Mr. Graham about whether he wants to press charges,” Lambert suggested. “We can’t do much unless he does, and we don’t even know where Frederick is as of now.”

“I bet you that’s why he’s disappeared,” Elijah scoffed. “He’s packed a bag and bolted because he’s scared that Will might report him for what he did to him. The prestigious Doctor Chilton couldn’t bear the embarrassment of being charged for assaulting an escort. What would polite society think?”

Sanchez gave him a pointed look. “We’ll keep that in mind, Mr. Benowitz. Thank you again for your time.”

Elijah shrugged, shutting the door behind them and trudging back to his desk.

“Fucking Chilton,” he muttered under his breath. “I hope something did fucking happen to him.”

Out Of The Womb And Into The Void

Chapter Notes

Placebo - One of a Kind

Trigger warning for this chapter: descriptions of sexual abuse and drugging in a flash back to Will's life after he'd been in Baltimore for a year. Take care lovelies <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

5 Years Ago - Baltimore

"You're gonna catch your death standing out here like that, honey."

Will turned, clenching his teeth to stop them from chattering so ridiculously as he did so. He felt like one of those stupid plastic kid's toys of the teeth that would skitter along and flop around on the floor when you wound them up and let them go.

"I'll be fine," Will managed to grit out past his teeth, clenching his hands tighter in his pockets where he'd shoved them in an attempt to keep them somewhat warm.

He'd managed to scrape together enough money for the last three nights to pay for a motel, and that money wasn't going to magically keep appearing if he didn't keep coming out here, night after night.

At first, it had been a fucking minefield of trying to figure out where the best spots where, the right streets to linger on, the patches that were run by pimps with dead eyes and vicious snarls and territorial girls who were absolutely not going to share their patch. Baltimore's seasons had changed slowly, vivid golden leaves shrivelling and leaving branches dead and exposed to harsh winds and glacial rain. It had all left Will exhausted, hollowed out with nothing on his mind but survival and the hope that on top of being able to keep earning enough money for a motel and to keep paying Jack back each month, he might be able to afford a coat suitable for this hostile winter ahead of him. He didn't know how he'd survived a year in Baltimore like this already; he couldn't do it for another winter.

"It's only going to get colder."

Will knew her; she worked the same streets as Will and had always given him a little smile when they'd become aware of each other's presence. She was pretty, her face clinging on to her youth despite the harsh life she no doubt lived. Her hair was caramel blonde, flecked with silvery strands that showed her age, and the crows feet around her eyes crinkled when she smiled underneath her makeup.

She always wore pearls - pearl earrings, a pearl necklace, a pearl ring on one of her fingers. She went by that name too, although Will doubted that Pearl was really her name. Not that it mattered. The hand on which she didn't wear any jewellery was mottled with scars and missing two fingers. She was always open about it, holding it up in the illumination of a street light when she'd first noticed Will looking, and grinned as she told him about the john who'd severed those fingers from her hand.

She was unhinged, damaged, but lovely. Will liked her.

"Well maybe I should think about getting myself a fur coat just like yours, Pearl," Will smiled gently.

She preened under the attention, smoothing her hand that was missing her index and middle finger over the arm of the coat. "It's real mink, you know that? I got a new client that likes to buy me nice stuff."

"Oh yeah? They regular?"

"Regular enough," Pearl smiled, peering up at the moon-less sky.

It was nearing one in the morning and it had been a slow night so far.

"See if he has any friends that want to buy me something a little warmer than this," Will said jokingly, gesturing to his flimsy leather jacket that did little to keep him warm.

Pearl's eyes lit up. "Oh, but he does! He's for sure got at least a couple of friends who'd like you."

Will swallowed. "Well, I could use the fucking money, I won't lie to you."

Pearl tsk-ed her tongue. "Where are you staying at the moment?"

"A motel. Not for much longer though if this keeps up," Will grunted, referring to the lack of johns.

Pearl chewed her lip thoughtfully, gaze flitting over Will. "I can ask, if you want. I mean it."

"When you next seeing him?"

"Tonight. But Will… I don't know if it's your kind of bag," she sighed, fiddling with the buttons on her fur coat, dyed a baby pink that would have made anyone else look horrendous, but suited Pearl's eccentricity.

Will glanced over at her sharply. "What sort of stuff is this john into? His friends into it too?"

"They like parties," Pearl mumbled. "Like you to be out of it, but only on what they give you. Then they pass you around."

Will's time working on the streets had so far consisted of tense, unpleasurable fucks over the bonnet of a car, kneeling on the floor of a sticky hotel carpet whilst he had his mouth used. The occasional hand-job in a bathroom stall when he'd had enough money to even go and buy himself a drink in the first place and seek out johns that way.

"I've done parties before," Will replied after a few silent moments.

And he had; sex parties that Jack took him and the other boys too, where they'd gleefully snort up whatever line was placed in front of them and got drunk enough to fall into the arms of whoever was closest. Parties where Will was on camera, either solo or with another boy, getting used and fucked and taken by multiple men. But then the camera stopped rolling and everyone peeled themselves away from each other and Will was always able to go and sleep in his own bed, to wash away the traces of other men in his shower.

"Not these kinds of parties, I bet," Pearl hummed, rocking on her heels a little.

Will squinted at her in the dim street lights. Her pupils were a little too wide, her jaw a little too twitchy. "How bad is it?"

Pearl sighed before hitching the hem of her skirt up and flashing the collection of cigarette burns near her groin. "This is from last time."

Will's mouth went dry. "How much?"

When Pearl told him, Will simply gritted his teeth again and nodded. He needed a new jacket. He needed to keep paying for the motel, if he didn't want to freeze. He needed to keep paying Jack - he *needed* to keep Matthew safe.

What were a few cigarette burns, a few cuts, a few tears, if it meant he got paid as much as Pearl said he would?

"Take that, beautiful," he rumbled as he held the pill out to Will with a glass of whiskey.

His name was Adrian, and Will didn't know or care if it was really his name. His hair was thinning and his eyes were dark, a little overweight from all of the rich food he no doubt gorged himself on and his nose was horribly crooked in comparison to his too small mouth. He was in his mid fifties from what Will could guess, and he was the kind of wealthy man that had enough money that he didn't even bother to drive himself. He had picked Will up in a sleek, blacked out stretched car, driven by a chauffeur. He'd been shivering underneath the street light in the spot he and Pearl usually frequented, just as Pearl had told him to be. Adrian wasn't Pearl's client, but one of his many friends. Friends who liked to drug prostitutes and do terrible things to them in lavish hotel rooms.

"What is it?" Will asked, holding it aloft under the dimmed lights of the hotel room.

"Bliss," Adrian answered with a shark-like smile before he pulled Will into a deep kiss. "Now take it. It's going to make this a lot easier for you."

“You’re not going to tell me what you’ve got planned for tonight?” Will asked.

“You’ll find out soon enough,” Adrian soothed him.

Will shuddered as he watched Adrian’s eyes greedily observing him, placing the pill on his tongue and washing it down with the whiskey. Adrian led him over to the couch that lined the length of one of the walls, settling back on ornate cushions and unbuckling his belt. Will didn’t need to even be told once to get to his knees, sinking to the floor and parting his lips as Adrian freed his length from his trousers.

“You’ll make everyone happy if you keep being that well behaved all night,” Adrian chuckled. “Don’t suck, you’re just going to keep it warm until everyone else gets here.”

Will did as he was told, shuffling forwards and relaxing his jaw. The wad of cash in the envelope Adrian had given him flashed in his mind as he forced himself to stay still between Adrian’s legs, eyes shut and breathing through his nose. He swallowed occasionally when the saliva pooled in his lax, open mouth, Adrian’s cock heavy and warm on his tongue. The older man would sigh and harden a little bit more each time Will swallowed, running a hand through Will’s curls.

When the group of men arrived, Will counted eleven of them in total, his stomach dropping in horror. The thought of the money in his jacket that was hung up in the closet was the only thing that kept him grounded as he was pulled to his feet and stripped. The thought of a new jacket. Paying for the motel. Paying back Jack. Keeping Matthew safe.

They barely stretched him. The pill, whatever it was that Adrian had given him, began to kick in. Will kept thinking of the money. Of buying something warmer. Keeping a roof over his head. Paying his debt. Making sure Matthew remained unharmed.

The belt left welts along his thighs and his back. His jaw ached from being constantly held open by rough fingers and leaking cocks. The cigarette burns on his stomach, the soles of his feet and the crooks of his elbows sizzled, but Will barely registered the pain once he was in full grip of whatever drug he’d taken. But still, he kept thinking about the money. New jacket. Paying for the motel. Paying Jack. Matthew - safe.

They forced him to eat cum off of the floor. He didn’t know whose it was. Didn’t know if it mattered. There was a fist inside of him at one point. Another cigarette pressed against his belly. Another sting across his back from a belt. The money. New coat. Motel. Jack. Matthew.

Two cocks inside of him, another in his mouth. He couldn’t breathe, couldn’t see. He ached. He felt his hair rip from his scalp, a hand stroking his cheek before it struck him. Laughter. Ash flicked over the welts on his back. A fist in his curls as they smeared his cheek along the floor where he hadn't licked away all the ejaculate, rubbing his face in it. Someone poured whiskey over him as he lay there gasping, chuckling when it stung his eyes, went up his nose. Money. Coat. Motel. Jack. Matthew.

It went on and on. He took them all, one after the other, again and again. In his ass, in his mouth. His hands were useless. He couldn’t hold himself up. His brain was fog, barely

conscious. What *had* they given him? Hands passed him around, stroked him, struck him, fondled him, pinched him. His head lolled pathetically when it wasn't being held upright. Money. Coat. Motel. Jack. Matthew.

When Will woke up, he retched and vomited and sobbed over the toilet of the hotel room. He was alone, but the traces of what had happened the night before were everywhere. Someone had even tucked more money than he'd originally been given into the envelope, adding to it before Adrian and his 'friends' all left.

Will shut something off inside of him that day.

A few nights later, Pearl ran her mutilated hand over the arm of his new coat, sturdy and warm and snug, smiling in that far away manner of hers with her pupils blown. "That's better, isn't it?"

"I'm not letting him pick me up again," Will spat bitterly into the frigid night air.

Pearl just hummed, digging around in her purse for a cigarette. "Sure, honey. You don't have to, not if you don't want to."

Will found quite quickly that although he didn't want to, he needed to. Needed the money. Needed new warm things. Needed to keep paying for the slightly nicer motel he'd found. Needed to pay back Jack. Needed to keep ensuring Matthew would be safe.

So when Adrian's blacked out car pulled up to the curb a week later, Will just clenched his jaw and got inside, ignoring the sympathetic look Pearl had given him as he did so.

Present day - Baltimore

Hannibal rose like a column of water, graceful and fluid as he stood and outstretched a hand to shake across the table, his movements like that of a dancer. Elijah raised an eyebrow but took the hand, sweeping his gaze over Hannibal in a clearly assessing manner - the doctor did the same, neither of them bothering to hide the fact that they were weighing each other up.

"You're not what I expected," Elijah began, once the maître d' that had shown Elijah to the table had left.

Elijah sat down, unbuttoning his suit jacket as he did so. The deep, jewel toned blue of his suit contrasted starkly with his thick shock of red hair and pale skin in a way that Hannibal could appreciate. It seemed he was not the only one who dressed like his attire was another weapon to his arsenal. He was younger than Hannibal had expected, no more than his late thirties, fascinating to look at in an ugly-beautiful way that he thoroughly enjoyed. He found himself twitching for a pencil to draw the man who sat opposite him.

“And what were you expecting?” Hannibal asked, taking his seat opposite and mirroring Elijah’s movements, unbuttoning his suit jacket with one hand.

Elijah’s eyes roamed over him again. “I didn’t think Will would be one for paisley *and* floral.”

Hannibal’s lips twitched in a small smile, but Elijah didn’t miss the flash of *something* in Hannibal’s eyes, the tiniest hint of whatever it was disappearing before Elijah could barely even register it. “Shall we forgo the pleasantries and get straight to business?”

“Come now Doctor Lecter, don’t tell me you’re going to skip the foreplay and get straight to it,” Elijah scolded him mockingly.

“Ah, but you are not a working boy, Elijah,” Hannibal smiled wolfishly. “I would have thought you would be able to appreciate something a little more succinct.”

“Buy a girl a drink, at least,” Elijah retaliated. “I’d much prefer to get to know you over a glass of wine before we start talking about the curly headed angel you’re intent on whisking away.”

Elijah knew full well that Will would have scowled at him for describing him as such, but he didn’t care. He didn’t want his fondness, his softness for Will to be revealed to Hannibal. Will, who had *always* had a special place in Elijah’s heart, no matter how surly or snappish or down right pig-headed he had been to Elijah over the years. No; tonight, Elijah had to put that fondness aside. Elijah was no fool, and he knew men like Hannibal Lecter smelt weakness like sharks smell blood in the water.

Hannibal ordered for the pair of them, and within moments Elijah was lifting the fine stemmed wine glass to his nose and inhaling in appreciation. He sipped, nodding at Hannibal in approval and watching the doctor take his own first mouthful.

“It’s not often I meet clients face to face,” Elijah told Hannibal, “but then again, I’m not the one that the clients want to meet.”

“Does it ever get tedious? Being the middleman between your employees and their clients?”

“No,” Elijah answered immediately, firmly. “It may surprise you to hear I care a lot about being the middleman, as you put it. It means I get to know my boys are safe.”

Hannibal tilted his head to the side a little, notching his chin up. “Is that what you consider Will to be? Your boy?”

“Not in the derogatory sense that I’m sure many other people have regarded him as,” Elijah answered discreetly. “I care about his well being, just as I do with everyone that works at my agency.”

“I can only thank you, then,” Hannibal murmured. “For having his best interests at heart.”

“That doesn’t mean I haven’t failed him before. Look at what happened with Frederick Chilton,” Elijah pointed out, expression turning sour.

“An unfortunate event, what happened with Fredrick.”

“Could have been a lot more unfortunate. Will was lucky that you were there to intervene, help him. I hate to think what could have happened if you hadn’t stopped Frederick doing any more damage than he’d already inflicted.”

Hannibal took a long, purposeful drink of his wine, tilting the glass just so. “I want you to know that you are not the only one who has Will’s best interests at heart.”

Elijah’s face turned a little hostile, Hannibal noted, his eyes flitting to his glass of wine before coming back to him. “Yes. So much so that you’re going to take him away from this horrible life he has, shower him in riches and treat him like the treasure he is. How long before that gush of affection dries up, Doctor Lecter?”

“I think you misunderstand,” Hannibal said carefully. “I am not taking Will away from anything. He’s not a damsel in distress and I have no interest in playing with him before casting him back out.”

“Is that the truth?” Elijah scoffed. “Because you’re not the first man who’s gotten it into his head that Will is a shiny toy to be plucked up and coddled and played with for a while, until they change their minds and get bored. Do you know how many men have called me, begging for me to let Will go so he can be their permanent lap dog?”

“I do not know,” Hannibal replied, his voice worryingly neutral, amicable.

“I’ve had men offer to outright *buy* Will, like he’s a piece of furniture, from me before,” Elijah replied harshly. “I’ve had men tell me that they’re going to give Will the world, that they’re in love with him and want to take him away from this life. I laugh down the phone at them and hang up every time.”

“And yet you agreed to meet me when I called you, despite already deciding for yourself that I must be that same type of man,” Hannibal remarked, raising an eyebrow.

“I don’t own Will Graham,” Elijah laughed dryly. “He works for me because he wants to. He agrees to certain rules and conditions I have because he wants to. He could easily do this job without me, now that he’s built up the clientele he has. It’s more a partnership, Doctor Lecter. We both get something out of it, but Will is not mine to keep or give away. He’s his own person, entirely, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Hannibal remained quiet, eyes fixed unnervingly on Elijah.

“If Will wants to leave, he’s more than welcome to,” Elijah continued, refusing to let his unease show. “There’s nothing holding him back. But I won’t let him go without at least warning him first, without letting him know what wealthy men with more money than sense are truly like at their core. You can’t buy love, Doctor Lecter. Just the impersonation of it.”

“Buying Will’s time has always been a necessary evil,” Hannibal told him quietly. “I am merely lucky enough that he has decided he no longer requires me to do so. I have never

wanted to be Will's client, but if it was the only way to become close to him, then I was willing to do it. Our relationship no longer requires transactions."

"Everything is a transaction," Elijah rebutted.

"Will once said the same thing to me," Hannibal mused, a faint smile flitting on his lips as he recalled the memory. "You taught him to guard himself well."

"Clearly not well enough," Elijah muttered.

"You cannot control with respect to whom you fall in love with," Hannibal returned, his smile turning whimsical.

Elijah finished his wine, patted his lips with his serviette and looked Hannibal dead in the eye. "Will Graham will burn you to cinders if you tarnish the love that he gives back to you. It's no fickle thing, for an animal who has only ever been neglected and beaten and mistreated to trust again, and trust completely. Don't take it lightly if he starts to love you in return, Doctor Lecter."

"You will be losing your favourite boy," Hannibal noted, eyes glimmering with the realisation. "Except it's not about the money for you, is it? Will is more to you than an employee."

Elijah smiled, but it was cold and harsh. "If you had seen Will when I found him, if you had met him at the point in his life that I did, then you would realise it's nothing short of a miracle that he's managed to piece himself back together the way he has. I don't want to see his struggle to claw himself out of the hell he was in go to waste. For him to end up back where he was."

"I know you do not trust me, Elijah," Hannibal murmured, "but you must believe me when I say that is never going to happen. Will has told me about his life before the pair of you met; there isn't the remotest possibility that Will is ever going to end up like that again."

"I don't trust you, no," Elijah conceded. "But I trust Will - and if he thinks you're good enough for him, then I don't have much choice other than to accept that."

"Will you at least accept my thanks for all you've done for Will?"

Elijah shrugged and then slowly rose to his feet, making a show of buttoning his suit jacket again and smoothing imaginary creases away. "I'm a pimp, Doctor Lecter. I may not be a violent one, or a cruel one, but I'm not in the business of being *thanked* for how I run my business and manage my boys. You can keep that appreciation for Will."

"Well, then thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I wanted to have a face to face interaction with the man who made my relationship with Will possible in the first place."

Elijah's sharp jaw hardened even more, eyes flitting up and down Hannibal where he sat as he stood over him on the other side of the table. He slid his hands into the pockets of his trousers and gave Hannibal one last bitter grin.

“I would say you got what you paid for, but I suppose you’re the lucky bastard who actually *did* get more than you bargained for when it comes to Will. Goodbye, Doctor Lecter.”

Elijah wrenched his coat and suit off when he returned home, his work cell still close by his side as it always was, and treated himself to a cigar and beer in the bath. His head was throbbing from the exchange he’d had with Lecter; if he didn’t already know that Will was just as deeply, unspeakably complex and convoluted as the man he had met tonight, he would never have been able to fathom why Will was interested in Lecter in the first place.

He could only hope that Will had made the right choice, his stomach churning to think of the washed out *ghost* of a man Will had been when he’d met him three years ago. But Elijah had never known Will to dally, to chase after nonsensical notions and whims of love and romance - as much as he didn’t like the thought of Will no longer being sheltered under the wing of his protection, Elijah had to let Will go.

If Hannibal Lecter was capable of loving Will, Will deserved it.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so, so much from the bottom of my heart guys, the love this fic has been getting is so sweet <3 I'm sorry I haven't replied to comments in so long, I've been a little busy! Also, I love that so many of you love Elijah lol, especially because he's my own character.

I'm starting back at work next week and will literally have NO TIME for myself and writing (:(((( ) but will endeavour to come back to this fic as often as I can - this mf WILL get finished, I promise you, but updates are going to have to become irregular because of how time consuming and busy my job is. I still have so much more plot, angst, smut, murder, hurt/comfort and general murder husbands-ness for this fic, so thank you for sticking around so far.

I Break The Back of Love For You

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Post Blue

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal watched as Will drifted between the aisles of the gas station, fingers trailing absentmindedly over bags of chips, eyes far away and hazy. Hannibal had already paid for the gas, and was leaning against the bonnet of the inconspicuous Chevrolet SUV he'd rented under a false name. Will had lingered inside the gas station after Hannibal had paid, mumbling something about meeting Hannibal back at the car.

Will finally turned and exited the otherwise empty gas station, eyes still blank and seeming faraway. Hannibal observed him carefully, desperate to know what Will was thinking. To know where his mind had trailed off to.

Will drifted past him wordlessly, sliding back into the passenger seat. Hannibal followed, glancing at the younger man briefly before buckling his seat belt and pulling away from the gas station. It was early morning, and they were on their third day of the long drive to Los Angeles. They'd stayed in St. Louis last night, leaving Missouri and beginning the next stretch to Oklahoma City.

"How are you feeling?" Hannibal murmured, breaking the quiet in the car.

Will blinked rapidly in succession, ceasing his far-away gaze that wasn't really looking at or seeing anything. His hand slid inside of his coat and he pulled out a bottle of Mountain Dew that Hannibal had most definitely not seen him buy whilst they were at the gas station.

"Thirsty?" Hannibal queried, raising an eyebrow at him as he glanced towards Will and away from the road.

"I don't… I just stole this from that gas station and I don't even know why," Will mumbled, staring at the offensively bright liquid.

Hannibal said nothing, letting Will mull over his thoughts.

"Hannibal," Will began, drawing in a deep breath. "When we get to L.A.… I'm worried that I won't be the person you think I am."

"Of course I will see a different side to you," Hannibal responded. "No-one is one-dimensional."

Will scrubbed his hands over his face, as if he was waking from a trance. “I already feel like I’m losing grip on who I am, the closer we get. The thought of seeing him again, of being back in that city - it’s making me feel strange. What if I… what if I can’t do it?”

The silence from Hannibal began to worry Will for a moment, but then the older man eventually spoke.

“If you find yourself unable to carry out what you have planned for Crawford, I would be more than happy to give him the end he deserves. If you would allow me,” Hannibal answered, slowly and carefully. “But if you decide this was a mistake and you wish to let him carry on his miserable existence, then that is what we shall do. We’ll leave him alive.”

“You wouldn’t think of me as weak if I decided not to kill him?”

“Never. You are strong Will, stronger than you give yourself credit for. His life is in your hands, not mine. It is up to you to decide what happens.”

“I’m scared I’ll be that terrified kid again that I was when I was with him,” Will confessed. “That all he’ll have to do is look at me a certain way and it’ll be like I never left, like he still has power over me.”

Hannibal’s hand grabbed Will’s where it lay loose and limp on his thigh, gripping their hands together tightly. “The only power he has left over you is the threat on Matthew’s life. I do not believe you’re the same person anymore - I do not believe that Jack Crawford is capable of overpowering you like he used to, dictating what you will or won’t do. You’re in control now, darling. You’re going to remove the threat that hangs over your friend’s head, no matter what it takes.”

“For Matthew,” Will whispered. “If for nothing else, then for Matthew. I can’t let this go on any longer.”

Hannibal drew their conjoined hands to his lips and kissed Will’s knuckles gently. “Whatever you wish, whatever you desire, I will help you with it.”

Will squeezed Hannibal’s hand back before staring back at the stolen bottle of Mountain Dew that still sat in his lap.

Twenty-four hours later, Will and Hannibal were back on the road heading towards Amarillo, with Albuquerque being their final destination for the evening. Hannibal was still driving, and it gnawed at Will’s insides that the older man must be getting tired, even though they had been stopping overnight in different cities to sleep.

“I’ll drive tomorrow,” Will announced, eyes set forwards on the road ahead of them. “You must be getting tired with all this driving.”

“It’s no bother to me,” Hannibal replied smoothly.

“Still,” Will muttered. “I want to help. Let me drive tomorrow.”

“As you wish.”

There was something brewing in the air between them as they grew closer and closer to Los Angeles, like the seeds of a storm taking root, the sky beginning to unsettle and unfurl. It grated against Will’s skin, against his ever pervasive empathy and his frustrating hypersensitivity to every minute move and word that came from Hannibal.

“What are you not telling me?” Will blurted out, ceasing to care about niceties and tip-toeing around any awkwardness between them.

Will had clawed Hannibal into a kiss over Chilton’s dead body after seeing the murder basement in Hannibal’s house - what could possibly be awkward between them anymore?

“Ever perceptive,” Hannibal rumbled with an amused smile fluttering around his lips. “What makes you think I am hiding something?”

Will’s temples ached, his skin tingling. “My annoyingly accurate ability to read you makes me think you’re hiding something.”

Hannibal ‘tssk’ed his tongue. “I would not say such an ability is annoying. It has kept you alive and in favour with many over the years, has it not?”

“At *my* expense, yes.”

“Hmm,” Hannibal mused. “And would you care to elaborate on what that expense entails?”

Will gritted his teeth momentarily “I think I’ve explained to you before exactly how it costs me. Why won't you just tell me?”

“Perhaps I am… ruminating over my own self control, how *I* will feel upon seeing Jack Crawford. How it will feel to look upon his face for the first time and know the man I am speaking to has caused you such suffering.”

“Your self-control is impeccable.”

Hannibal’s upper lip twitched. “You did not know me in Italy.”

“My, my, Doctor Lecter,” Will drawled, gazing away out the window as Hannibal relished the deepening of Will’s Louisiana accent, “I couldn’t possibly imagine you lapsing on that control you exert so carefully.”

“I am capable of being impulsive,” Hannibal murmured lowly.

Will lent his head back against the headrest, letting his head loll towards Hannibal and fixing a determined gaze upon the side of Hannibal’s head as he kept his eyes forwards on the road. “Is that how we ended up here? Driving for days to kill a man you never met? Is that how you ended up deciding you wanted a whore? Impulsivity?”

Will grinned at the clench of Hannibal’s knuckles as he grasped the wheel tighter. He shot up suddenly, leaning over the centre console of the car and breathing down Hannibal’s ear

heavily, lips grazing his earlobe.

“Do you really want this? Want *me* ?” Will whispered, low and breathy in Hannibal’s ear.

Hannibal opened his mouth but stopped as he felt Will’s fingertips graze down his flank and over his hip, ghosting over his knee cap suddenly and then his upper thigh. “Will.”

“What’s wrong?” Will’s voice rasped against Hannibal’s ear again. “Or shall I guess? Since I’m so *good* at reading you?”

“I’d rather you tell me what’s wrong, what’s on your mind,” Hannibal answered, glancing at Will briefly before looking back at the road. “I don’t need a performance, Will.”

Will stiffened in Hannibal’s peripheral vision. “All I have ever *done* is perform.”

“Against your will.”

“The funny thing is,” Will murmured low and gravelly against Hannibal’s ear again, “You perform enough and you realise that it *is* who you are. There is no *you* . I don’t exist, Hannibal, not really. All I am is the accumulation of every version of myself I’ve been paid to be. Lover, whore, toy. Willing body, pretty mouth. Wide eyed and appreciative of every fucking *bone* thrown to me. Will Graham doesn’t *exist.* ”

The tyres of the car screech as Hannibal pulled over suddenly, jaw tight. Will’s smile was almost a snarl.

“Ask for what you want, Will. You don’t need to antagonise like this.”

Will was in his lap before Hannibal could blink.

“Who says I’m antagonising?” Will grinned manically, grasping Hannibal’s face between his palms and sweeping his thumbs over the doctor’s cheekbones. “You said it yourself. We’re all multifaceted. The closer we get to Los Angeles, the more and more I feel like *that* version of myself again.”

“Will,” Hannibal breathed. “You exist. Beneath everything you’ve endured, there is the core essence of who you are, alive and thrumming.”

Will shook his head. “You simply added another layer to the façade, Hannibal. Killer; murderer. Chilton was the catalyst to it.”

“You’re stressed,” Hannibal reasoned with him. “It’s natural to start doubting yourself.”

Will threw his head back and laughed bitterly, still clutching Hannibal’s face. “Oh, you are precious sometimes. You know what?”

“What is it, darling?”

Will’s eyes slipped shut, and Hannibal was fully aware of how careful he needed to be to not topple him over the edge. He knew full well the events of what had happened with Chilton,

and now their decision to drive across the country to kill another, was taking its toll on Will's already fragile psyche. Or was it fragile? Hannibal flipped between believing Will was fragile and the strongest person he knew. Perhaps the truth lay somewhere in between; it usually did.

I don't exist, Hannibal, not really…Will Graham doesn't ***exist.***

"What it is…," Will drawled again, his thickened accent making Hannibal's hands grip tightly around his waist. "Is that I want you to lay me down and fuck the doubts out of my head. I need something to fuckin' ground me."

"Are you sure?"

"Don't call me darling in that fucking voice of yours and not expect me to want you to fuck me senseless," Will breathed, hot and frantic down Hannibal's ear as he leaned forwards, hips undulating slightly against his.

Hannibal's cock stirred. "I apologise."

Will scraped his fingernails down Hannibal's jugular. "Don't make me beg."

"Is that what I'm doing?"

"Most men would have taken the hint by now. Most men would have had me folded in half on the backseat by now or bouncing on your - "

A vicious twist of fingers in Will's curls, wrenching his head back, and the younger man's words died in his mouth, replaced by a startled but pleased gasp.

"Is this what you need?" Hannibal asked, teeth skimming Will's throat.

Will squirmed in Hannibal's lap, whimpering as he felt the bulge at Hannibal's crotch. "Yes… *yes* ."

Fingertips dug into Will's hip and he bit his lip to keep the startled moan trapped in his mouth.

"Right here? Pulled over on the side of the road, where anyone could drive past and see?"

Will grinned manically at the roof of the car from where Hannibal's hand still had his head wrenched back by his curls. "Just like the whore I am."

Hannibal made a displeased noise. "And what if I say no? What if I say no, because I don't want you to think of yourself like that anymore?"

"You don't get to tell me how to see myself," Will whispered, still smiling in that unhinged way despite the tears that were suddenly clouding in his eyes. "You aren't paying me. I don't have to listen to shit anymore."

“You don’t want my money,” Hannibal murmured against the hot flesh of Will’s neck, lips brushing over the pulse in his throat. “I thought we’d established that.”

“No,” Will agreed with a sigh, shuddering. “Want your cock, though. Inside of me, now.”

He ground his hips down for emphasis.

“Will…” Hannibal sighed, kissing his Adam’s apple. “I’d like to lay you down properly, darling. In a bed where I can hold you, take care of you.”

“Hannibal,” Will gritted out in return, “I’m not a precious piece of glass that’s going to break. I don’t need laying down and I don’t need you to make love to me. I need you to *fuck me* , rough and dirty in this car, pulled over on the side of the road. So do you want me to plead and beg with you? Because I will… I’ll ask you so nice ‘n pretty, I swear - ”

“Get off me.”

Will froze, eyes widening in horror and body going still as he slowly lowered his head back to look at Hannibal once the older man released his grip from his curls. Hannibal’s eyes were dark, simmering when Will’s gaze met his.

“Get on the back seat. Now.”

Will’s heart seemed to restart, and the *relief* , the flood of relief at knowing Hannibal wasn’t actually rejecting him nearly bawled him over. He scrambled frantically onto the spacious back seat, already making short work of his belt buckle and shucking his trousers down followed by his underwear, lowering himself onto his hands and knees to present his ass.

He turned his head, cheek pressed into the cool leather of the seat he rested on and bit his lip, eyes wide and deploring as he looked at Hannibal.

Hannibal; lover, murderer, cannibal. Partner in crime. Saviour.

Saviour . *Salvation* .

Hannibal’s eyes were hungry as he looked at Will, briefly breaking their gaze before opening the glove compartment and wrenching it open, withdrawing a bottle of lube from within. Will almost laughed, but was secretly grateful. As much as he was willing to take Hannibal with nothing but spit to ease the way, at least he wouldn’t be aching and wincing as much tomorrow.

“Yeah,” Will breathed. “Please.”

Hannibal climbed onto the backseat, settling himself behind Will and skimming the palm of one hand over Will’s exposed flesh, leaving a trail of goosebumps in his wake. Will’s shoulders were cinched tight, breathing shallow and his head pressed against the seat in anticipation.

“You should see yourself,” Hannibal rumbled behind him, followed by the click of a cap on the bottle of the lube. “So needy for it, aren’t you?”

“For you,” Will replied, heart hammering in his chest suddenly.

Hannibal had an uncanny ability to fuck the noise away in Will’s head, and Will was so fiercely grateful for the warm, quiet buzz Hannibal left in his wake inside of his mind that he didn’t care if he seemed desperate. He *was* . He’d swallow his pride any day to admit how much he craved the hushed buzz left behind by the older man's touch when the roaring crescendo in Will’s mind was becoming unbearable.

He *liked* slipping into this dynamic, Hannibal controlling him and moving him and teasing every last ounce of pleasure and feeling out of him until his bones were jelly and his mind was blank - only Hannibal had ever done that to him. Had made him feel small and safe but sensual and potent at the same time, because Hannibal did not hide how desperately *he* wanted Will. And the feeling of mind-soaring dizziness and squirming delight at hearing Hannibal call him *good boy* , the rumble of satisfaction he made when Will called him *Daddy* … Will wanted to drown in it, constantly. He hadn’t stopped craving Hannibal since the doctor had kissed him against the cold brick wall outside of the bar they’d bumped into each other in, all those months ago.

“I don’t think I need to open you up for long, do I?” Hannibal mused, cold lube pouring directly over Will’s hole.

He nearly yelps at the sensation. “No… don’t want to wait.”

Two fingers dip slightly inside of Will, and he bites down on his lip to silence the groan in his throat. The slap across his left ass cheek was unexpected, but oh-so delightfully welcomed as Hannibal’s fingers plunge into him at the same time.

“None of that,” Hannibal reprimanded him. “I want to hear every sound you make, sweet thing. Do you understand?”

“Yes,” Will breathed out shakily, swallowing.

“Yes what?”

“Yes, Daddy,” Will groaned, a sob building in his throat as Hannibal’s deft fingers found his prostate immediately.

“That’s better,” Hannibal praised him. “You know how to be good for me, don’t you, Will?”

Will nodded fervently. “Yes. I want to be good for you, all the time, I - *fuck* - oh fuck, that’s so good!”

Pleasure was ripping its way through his nervous system, Hannibal’s fingers creating sensations that shouldn’t be possible from a few simple touches. Hannibal chuckled behind him softly.

“So appreciative of everything I give you, aren’t you?” Hannibal murmured, leaning down to kiss softly down the nape of Will’s neck and onto his spine.

Will whimpered at the heat radiating from the doctor's body as he covered him, beginning to feel himself quake as he held himself up on his hands and knees. Hannibal's fingers were relentless.

"Y-yes," Will stammered, cock twitching and dripping pre-cum onto the seat below him. "Thank you, Daddy."

"Do you feel better already, Will? Is Daddy taking care of you like you wanted?"

Will whined and nodded frantically. "So good… so good, th-thank you."

The fingers withdraw and Will whimpers at the loss of being filled, looking up with glossy eyes and parted lips behind him at Hannibal.

"Ssh, don't worry," Hannibal soothed him, leaning forwards a little more and kissing Will firmly. "You'll get Daddy's cock now."

Will doesn't have time to process it before the blunt head of Hannibal's cock is pushing past his rim, the stretch of it snatching his breath from his lungs. Hannibal doesn't stop, doesn't fuck into him in slow, loving increments, inch by inch - not like he usually does. His hands grip Will's hips in a bruising force and he makes Will take it, all the way down to root of him.

" *Holy fuck,"* Will hisses, his eyes watering. "Oh my *God* , oh God, I can't - "

"You can," Hannibal cuts him off, holding Will tight against him to stop him squirming away. "You always take me so well, darling, and I know what you need."

Hands still clamping Will to his groin like a vice, keeping them flush together, Hannibal somehow pushes forwards and rocks back in what must only be centimetres, but the overwhelming sensation of being split apart in one go has Will near sobbing into the seat he's kneeling on. It's entirely overwhelming, borderline painful but so beautifully mingled in with pleasure, that Will can't tell up from down after a few more agonising minutes.

"Are you ready now? Ready for me to fuck you properly?"

"Please," Will rasps. "Please fuck me Daddy, need you to move, *please* ."

"You're so sweet when you beg for it," Hannibal breathes against Will's shoulder, kissing the skin over his shoulder blade tenderly, worshipping his flesh.

The way he fucks Will is anything short of tender of worshipping.

Hannibal's fingers are most definitely going to bruise around Will's hips, because the hold he has on him as he slams into Will is punishing. Will is unable to move even an inch, completely at Hannibal's mercy as he fucks into him. His pace is brutal, hips snapping back and forth and filling the car with grunts that make him sound more animal than man. Will is no better, sobbing and mewling into the leather seat as he's fucked, nails clawing at the

upholstery. It's so much, almost too much, and yet precisely what Will needed. He can't think of anything beyond the way Hannibal's cock is driving into him, the way his fingers dig into his bones, the way their skin slaps and meets together.

"Touch yourself, sweet boy," Hannibal commands him, his voice dark and heady. "Go on, it's alright. You're going to make yourself cum whilst I fuck you."

Will shudders, full body, and obeys. He encircles his length, dropping the rest of his weight onto his free arm and stretching his back out for Hannibal to admire. He *knows* what a sight he is when his snowy skin is stretched out and his body contorts and shifts, when the muscles and bones and cartilage in his back all glide together with his movements; he's had countless johns and clients tell him how pretty his back is as he's been fucked in this exact same position.

Hannibal is not immune to the sweet, supple stretch of his skin either.

"That's it," Hannibal encourages him, tempo picking up as he works his cock back and forth into Will. "There's my good boy."

Will keens at the praise, the simple words enough to have his stomach tying itself up in knots as he jerks his cock in time with Hannibal's thrusts, imagining it's the older man's hand handling him roughly and not his own.

Heat rises in his belly, and Will pants against the leather with ragged breaths, moans falling from his lips. Hannibal's cock is making him feel so *full* and the sensation is addictive; the feel of being pounded into the seats in the back of the car exactly what Will had wanted. Hannibal grazes against his prostate and Will angles his hips back and down against him, choking on his breath as the head of Hannibal's cock pummels into the nub inside of him with each thrust.

"There," Will gasps, jerking himself harder, faster. "Don't stop, please, keep fucking me right t- *there* , *oh* - "

"Go on, that's it," Hannibal encourages him, mouthing at Will's spine with hot, open mouthed kisses. "Nearly there, darling, take it. It's yours."

Will scrunches his eyes closed, toes curling and his balls tightening. White heat flashes behind his eyes and he's cumming, thick ropes of it streaking the seat beneath him. His cock twitches in his hand as he sees stars, breath ragged and wet in his throat. He's shuddering, locked in Hannibal's embrace as the other man picks up his pace.

He fucks into Will with short, brutal thrusts with no other goal than to make Will whimper and squirm with oversensitivity as he reaches his own orgasm. Will is boneless beneath him now, like a rag doll in his arms, fucked open and used. It's delectable, and the way Will quietly sobs with each drag of Hannibal's cock over his prostate has him soaring towards the edge of the cliff.

“Oh, Will,” Hannibal sighs. “Perfect boy. Do you want my cum? Want Daddy to fill you up?”

Will *sobs* . “Yesss, *nngh* - please, please, pl - ”

Hannibal snarls and shoves the back of Will’s head into the seat beneath him, silencing him. He grunts, grits his teeth and the only sound in the car is the slap of their skin meeting and Will’s muffled, choked cries. Hannibal’s orgasm crashes over him and he groans out into the air of the car, head tipped back and clutching Will as if he’ll disappear.

Will is shaking beneath him, and Hannibal lays his full weight down over the top of him, still buried inside of him. Neither of them say anything, simply letting their breathing return to normal. Will lets the solid, heavy mass of Hannibal laid over his back ground him, bring him back down from the mind-reeling fucking he just experienced.

Will isn’t sure how much time passes, but he becomes aware of the feeling of Hannibal’s cum drying and going tacky from where some of it has leaked out of him, and he blinks himself back to reality.

“We should get back on the road,” Will rasps, his voice a husk.

Hannibal lets him wriggle out from underneath him, pulling his clothes back on. Just as he’s climbing back to the passenger seat, he grabs Will by the wrist and halts him.

“Better?”

Will’s eyes soften and the line of his shoulders drop a little. “Yes. Thank you… I’m sorry, Hannibal.”

“For what?”

“For goading you into doing what I want.”

Hannibal smiles lazily, releasing Will’s wrist. “You goaded me into nothing. I enjoyed it - *enjoy* it - as much as you.”

Will’s throat bobs as he swallows, eyes settling on Hannibal’s smile. “You ground me. I need that.”

“I know you do,” he replies gently. “It’s alright, Will. I told you I’d give you everything you need. Don’t be ashamed of taking it, when it’s so freely given.”

Hannibal redresses himself and climbs back over into the front, settling back into the driver’s side. He starts the car, glancing at Will to see the younger man slumped down and tilting his head back against the chair with his eyes slipped shut again. Hannibal stretches over and kisses him on the forehead, on his closed eyelids and then gently over his soft, pink lips.

“Sleep,” Hannibal murmured. “I’ll wake you when we get to Amarillo. We can swap then and you can drive.”

“We’re getting closer,” Will hums, eyes still shut as Hannibal pulls back onto the road.

“Indeed we are,” Hannibal agrees. “All the while Jack Crawford is oblivious.”

“Hannibal…” Will begins, eyes opening and sitting up.

“What is it?”

Will takes a deep breath, something swimming in the depths of his blue eyes that Hannibal can’t quite place. “There’s something else I want to do.”

“Enlighten me,” Hannibal muses, wondering what his darling Will is going to say.

The words that fall from Will’s lips are entirely unexpected, but they cause a predatory, feline smile to spread across Hannibal’s mouth.

“That sounds perfect, darling.”

Chapter End Notes

hello, I am somewhat-semi-kind-of back from the dead lol. I'm sorry this chapter took MONTHS to be written, my life is so hectic atm with work.

(Also please forgive the grammar mistakes in this update, I'm fully aware I've been lazy with not choosing a fucking tense to write in, hopefully the smut makes that more forgivable.)

I have no idea when the next chapter is coming, but thank you for sticking around <3

Coming up: Jack is about to be in deep shit

I'll Wait My Turn, To Tear Inside You

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Broken Promise

Apologies this chapter is very short - I just wanted some fluff in between all the murder <3

"...a Nation-wide appeal has been launched by the Maryland State Police Department in search of a Doctor Frederick..."

Jack stretches from his slumped position in his office chair, scratching the back of his neck and pushing the glasses further up his nose as he blinks wearily at the computer screen before him. Sighing, he begins typing his reply to the production company asking when one of his boys is next available for a shoot.

"...Officers say they're concerned for the well-being of Doctor Chilton, and the board of psychiatrists and governors who oversee the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane say Doctor Chilton's disappearance is entirely out of character for...."

Jack reaches for his bourbon - takes a long, deep swallow of the liquid and sets it back.

"...members of the public are urged to come forward if anyone has any information about the whereabouts of Doctor..."

"Jesus Christ, haven't they got anything better to report on?" Jack mutters under his breath, fumbling for the remote and turning the TV off.

That's better; quiet. Peace, in a small sliver he feels he's rarely afforded. Always a boy whining in his ear about *something* , always another agent on the phone pestering him about a shoot, always over-familiar whores leering at him and offering obscene favours at parties when they see the powder he pulls from his jacket.

But now? Now it's just the faint rumble of L.A. traffic in the distance, the soft whir of the AC unit working.

Until it's not just those small things anymore - his cell vibrates and blares from next to his elbow on his desk. A number he doesn't recognise… not that that's anything new.

"Crawford speaking," he grunts as a way of greeting.

"Mr. Crawford," the smooth, elegant response comes. "I hope I'm not disturbing you, and my apologies for calling out of the blue."

Jack sits up a little straighter. He *knows* what money sounds like when he hears it, and whoever is the owner of that voice on the other end of the line - they're *dripping* with it.

"And whom am I speaking with?" he asks slowly, drumming his fingers on the desk.

"You don't know me, Mr. Crawford, but I know someone who is of great significance to you. I would like to meet you."

"Let me cut to the chase," Jack sighs irritably. "I don't have time for word games. You work for an agency or something? You want one of my boys for a shoot?"

"No, nothing like that, I assure you. But I must insist that we meet; I promise it is to your benefit and financial gains."

Jack narrows his eyes. "You haven't even given me your name, and yet I'm supposed to just want to meet you because you're saying I'll get paid? Are you high or something?"

"I have something that you want."

Jack snorts, rolling his eyes. "You think you're the first person to say that to me? I really don't have time for cryptic phone calls, so whatever you say next better be worth it or I'm hanging up."

"I'm here to repay the debt Will Graham owes you."

The air at the back of Jack's neck all of a sudden feels wrong, his gut clenching and his spine stiffening. Who the fuck was he speaking to?

"Who are you?"

"I look after Will."

"Are you his pimp? His manager?"

"If that is what you would like to call it, Mr. Crawford," the smooth voice answered. "I would very much like to meet you in person to discuss all of this, however. Twenty-thousand dollars is a lot of money to hand over without even having ever seen your face, don't you think?"

Jack straightened in his chair, fingertips gripping the edge of his desk. "Why would you want to pay off your whore's debt?"

There was a soft sigh over the line before the voice spoke again. "Does it matter why, Mr. Crawford? Are you not happy to know you will finally have all of the money back that Will took from you?"

"Of course I am," Jack replied coldly. "I just don't understand why."

A soft laugh, and then: "You don't need to understand why, Jack. You just need to meet me and receive the money."

Jack clenched his teeth and then sighed. “When? Where?”

“I understand you are a busy person, Jack. I will come and collect you personally.”

“I’d rather you didn’t.”

“But you would like the full sum of the money Will still owes you in one payment, wouldn’t you?”

The stranger had him there.

“Fine. When?”

“Tuesday next week. I will know where you are, Mr. Crawford.”

Jack’s eyebrow ticked. “Listen. I don’t know who the fuck you are, and I quite frankly don’t give a shit. But you do *not* want to threaten me, money or no money.”

“Come now, Jack,” the smooth voice purred. “I meant no harm. I am merely doing you the courtesy of making this whole process much easier.”

“The process,” Jack bit out, “should have been Will paying me the money. Not *you* , whoever you are.”

“And my dear Will has been paying you that money, dutifully and regularly. We’re simply speeding the process up now. No more ties or bonds to tether us to lives we do not lead anymore.”

Jack snorted. “You think you’re Will’s get out of jail free card? That bastard will always be what he is; desperate *scum* .”

A long exhale came from the other end of the call followed by a few moments of silence. “Tuesday, Mr. Crawford. I look forward to meeting you in person.”

The call ended before Jack could even open his mouth to reply. There was a strange taste in his mouth and the weight of a stone in his stomach. He blinked rapidly, turning the TV back on, and stared blankly at the same newsreel of the missing doctor from Maryland that was being replayed.

“Are these *real* diamonds?”

Hannibal smiled wolfishly, his eyes glinting in the dimmed lights of the restaurant. “Yes. Is it to your liking?”

Will held the collection of jewellery aloft in the light, one piece at a time. A ring, a necklace and a bracelet, all bearing a coat of arms Will did not know or recognise, inlaid with diamonds and -

“Moonstones?”

Hannibal ‘tssk’ed his tongue. “Opals.”

Will stared in wonder.

The coat of arms on all the pieces of jewellery was made from gold. On either side of the shield were two lions acting as the supporters, almost demonic looking with their twisted tongues stuck out between their fangs. The mantling was composed of two ravens, heads held aloft and poised. On the shield was a large snake, devouring a man, his torso, arms and head dangling from the jaws of the serpent. The snake’s eyes bore milky stones - the opals, as Hannibal had corrected him - that glinted with shards of the rainbow under the light. Diamonds decorated the border of the shield.

Each piece of jewellery was a work of art in its own right, sitting heavy from the weight of the gold and precious stones.

“And you want me to have these? Why?”

“A claim of ownership. Jack will be more likely to believe you belong to me if you’re wearing them.”

Will frowned, stroking a finger over the snake on the coat of arms of the bracelet. The chain was made from gold, like everything else, with each link glinting with the diamond fixed into it. “I don’t need jewellery for us to fool Jack into thinking you’re my pimp.”

“Oh? Would you rather I brand you with my initials instead? Tattoo you?”

Will bit his lip, suppressing a shudder. “No - I just… this isn’t necessary, Hannibal. I don’t need to be decked in jewels for us to make our story believable.”

“And yet this is exactly what I would expect of you if our story was true,” Hannibal murmured, voice low and hypnotic.

Will swallowed as he watched Hannibal lift the glass of red wine to his lips, mouth parting to sip his drink. “A pimp who dresses his whore in gold and diamonds?”

“My boy would be dripping in luxury, adorned with markers that he belongs to me,” Hannibal mused, lips twitching into a predatory smile once more. “I take *very* good care of what belongs to me.”

Will narrowed his eyes at his lover. “Why do I get the impression you’re enjoying this facade we’re crafting a little more than you should?”

“I have no shame in admitting I very much like the idea of owning you. My perfect boy, always so pliant and docile from constantly being fucked, but knowing it is *me* who you return to at the end of it all. No matter who pays to have you, everybody knows you belong to me. To your Daddy.”

Will’s cheeks immediately bloom pink, his breath quickening and his cock stirring to life in the suit trousers Hannibal had picked out for him for the evening. “That’s the impression you want to make on Crawford?”

“Of course,” Hannibal muses, gaze sweeping over Will covetously. “I think we will play the part perfectly. But that is all it is, Will; an act. You are far too brutal, my love, to be the part we will play for Crawford. Of course you are those things sometimes, but *only* for me. Nobody else will ever see you like that again.”

“Because I belong to you,” Will whispered, blue eyes wide and yearning across the table.

“Just as much as I belong to you. You are mine to do as I please with, just as much as I wish it to be my sole purpose to please you. To serve you and love you.”

Suddenly the jewellery in his hands felt much heavier and Will felt his breath catch in his throat.

“What are you saying, Hannibal?”

The older man rose to his feet, smoothing down the front of his suit jacket as he stood. Will watched in anticipation as he rounded their table to stand behind him, his presence at Will’s back making his heart race. Hannibal wasn’t even touching him, and he felt like the pressure of the air around him was going to make him sink to his knees.

Long, deft fingers plucked the bracelet from Will’s hands and delicately fastened it around Will’s wrist, stroking over his pulse point before letting him go. Then, Hannibal slid the ring over Will’s left ring finger and took the necklace from him next.

“I am saying, mylimasis,” Hannibal breathed against the shell of his ear, “that I am in love with you. That I adore you. That I wish for nothing more than to be at your beck and call, to give you everything that I am. You broke the curse of the banality my life was being crushed under, have given everything a new purpose. Mirror to my soul, the only one who hears and recognises the song I sing. I am saying I love you, Will.”

The necklace slides around his throat, gold chain links encrusted with diamonds, and the latch fastens at the back of his neck. Lips graze over his earlobe, skimming his jaw. There are tears in his eyes threatening to fall before Will realises what’s happening.

“You love me,” Will whispers, hoarse and breathless.

“With everything that I am.”

Will turns in his seat, eyes locking immediately with Hannibal’s. He reaches for the older man, and he comes immediately, their lips crashing together.

Will doesn’t care who sees them, doesn’t care that they’re in a restaurant out in the public eye. He doesn’t care what has come before, or that in a few days they will murder Jack Crawford together. All that matters is this very moment and the feel of Hannibal’s mouth against his.

Hannibal loves him. Hannibal will do anything for him. Hannibal has found completion in Will. Will feels exactly the same, except his own emotions, the sheer outpouring of love from

Hannibal drowns his empathy so deep he cannot form the words to say it back. So instead, he says:

“Take me back to the hotel,” Will whispers frantically against Hannibal’s lips. “Let me show you how much I love you back.”

“Perfect boy,” Hannibal hummed in praise against his pulse, hands pulling him close so their bodies are flush. “You are all I will ever want, ever need.”

Will kisses him again and feels the steady thump of Hannibal’s heart against his own chest. They leave hand in hand, stepping out into the cooling Los Angeles night air, and Will relishes the weight of the jewellery around his finger, neck and wrist the whole time.

Because I belong to you - Mirror to my soul, the only who recognises and hears the song I sing.

Got The Muse In My Head

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Nancy Boy

On Monday night, Jack Crawford stocks up on whiskey and bullets for his gun. Will drapes himself across Hannibal's lap in the rented Chevrolet where they watch Jack from the darkened parking lot, the engine off and silence hanging in the air. One of Hannibal's hands is playing with the curls on Will's head, his eyes trained on the hulking mass of a man they are quietly stalking throughout Los Angeles together.

"He hasn't changed at all," Will murmurs into the quiet of the car, observing the way Jack still holds that same mean set to his jaw. "Maybe a little more silver in his hair, but that's about it."

"How does it feel, seeing him after all this time?"

Will shrugs, frowning. "Maybe it's because we're in here, and he's in that store, totally oblivious… but I feel nothing. I thought my throat would close up and my blood would run cold."

The hand in Will's hair continues to curl strands around fingers and stroke his scalp. "He'll be armed tomorrow when we meet."

"I don't remember him ever *not* carrying," Will supplied, eyes still fixed on their target as he approaches the cashier with the bottle of whiskey fisted in his hand. "As long as we can get him unconscious, the gun won't be an issue."

"That man looks like he needs the same dosage as a rhinoceros to sedate him," Hannibal commented dryly, the distaste seeping into his voice.

Will snorts. "Just as well you packed that much then. I told you he was going to be a handful."

Hannibal sighs dramatically. "You'll have to help me with the heavy lifting, darling. Who knows if I will be able to cart such a mass about."

Will sits up a little, smirking and trailing a finger down Hannibal's defined bicep hidden so well and so discreetly beneath his shirt. "Not feeling up to the job? And here I was thinking you got all these muscles from paper pushing behind that desk in your office all day."

Hannibal's eyes glimmer dangerously, the hold on Will's hair tightening. "Careful, Will."

Will fails to suppress the shudder that runs down his spine, biting his lip as his belly flips at the promise of debauchery and danger in Hannibal's gaze. "Is that a threat?"

Hannibal leans forwards until their lips are just skimming, their breath mingling. "Would you like it to be?"

Will's eyes dance with mirth in the darkness of the car, the only light a distant street light in the parking lot shining in on them. Briefly, they both glance out to see Jack exiting the store and heading to his car, completely unaware Will and Hannibal are watching.

"Should we follow him?" Will asks, eyes trained on Jack.

"I don't think so," Hannibal answers, his voice gravelly and low. "Crawford can wait."

"Oh? Wait for what?"

"He can wait to set his eyes upon you and have you be the last thing he sees before his pitiful life ends," Hannibal replies darkly. "Will?"

Will blinks rapidly, caught off guard. "Yes?"

Hannibal cups his jaw in one hand, the other still in his curls, stroking his thumb over the sharp bones of Will's exquisite face. "On your knees."

Will's heart stumbles, trips and falls in his chest. Hannibal merely gives him a look that says " *well* ?", and slides his seat back all the way so that Will can fit between the driver's seat and the wheel and pedals. Will remains frozen on Hannibal's lap.

The grip on his jaw tightens. "Is my good boy not listening?"

Will swallows, tremors taking hold of his limbs as he jerkily climbs off Hannibal's lap and sinks to his knees in the cramped space between Hannibal's legs on the floor of the car. "No. I'm listening."

"I'm glad you are," Hannibal murmurs, his voice *dripping* in sin. "Now, do you need more instructions on what comes next, or do you understand what I want?"

"I understand," Will blurts out, hands eagerly shooting forwards for Hannibal's buckle and fly.

A sharp yank on his curls stops him. "Forgetting something?"

Will sucks in a sharp breath, eyes glazing over. God, he fucking *loves* this, loves it when Hannibal pushes back at his defiance and teasing with this dominance. It makes his bones liquid.

"I understand, Daddy," Will corrects himself.

"Go on, then."

Will wastes no time. He unbuckles the belt before him, drags the zipper down on Hannibal's pants and mouths at the cotton covering the doctor's cock. Hannibal sighs softly, the hand in Will's hair resuming its gentle petting.

"Tomorrow night," Hannibal begins tenderly, "when Crawford is dead and his blood is drying on your skin, I'm going to make love to you and remind you exactly how very far you have come from this life, Will. I want to worship every inch of you as you stand triumphant over the man who hurt you and used you."

The words shouldn't have had the effect they did on Will, but they lit a fire ablaze somewhere inside of him. Will wanted it badly - to have Hannibal's hands and lips roaming over him as he caught his breath, hands dripping with Crawford's blood whilst Hannibal cherished him in his arms.

Will said nothing, however, too occupied with freeing Hannibal from the confines of his underwear. The air hit Hannibal's cock for a mere split second before the warmth of Will's mouth enveloped him. The older man lets out a soft sigh, head tilting back against the car seat headrest.

Across the parking lot, Jack Crawford shifts his car into gear and begins his drive home, oblivious to the eyes watching him through lids narrowed into slits.

Spit drips down Will's chin, and a strong, dextrous thumb sweeps across its trail, gathering it.

"That's it," Hannibal breathes heavily. "Just like that, darling."

Jack was pacing. He wasn't accustomed to pacing. But waiting for the stranger who'd called him days ago to meet him was making something in his gut churn, cold sweat prickle along his spine. Jack didn't like this, at all, but he disliked not having his fifty-thousand dollars more.

But this was also a chance to finally be rid of Will Graham, once and for all. To finally close the door on the whole sordid affair that Will Graham had been.

When Will had fled Los Angeles, Jack could not recall a time he'd felt rage like it before. And if anything, it astounded him that the whore had not only escaped, but had run off with fifty grand. Of course, it hadn't taken long for Jack to work out what had happened. One look at Matthew's face, and Jack knew that he had been the one to free Will from his locked bedroom.

He'd beaten Matthew to the point of hospitalisation when he'd realised what had happened, and then deducted the hospital bills from Matthew's ' *wages* ' for the next few months, effectively rendering Matthew housebound and penniless. Even more isolated and dependent on Jack than he ever had been before. And yet, Matthew still hadn't tried to run. Hadn't tried to contact Will. He stayed put, kept his mouth shut, and once the stitches and bruises were gone, walked straight back onto set to shoot another porno when Jack ordered him to.

Matthew's compliance and his submission made him into powerful leverage against Will. His safety was the perfect threat to make Will fall into line. And fall into line, Will Graham had.

And now, whoever this stranger on the phone had been, Will was under his control. Jack had scoffed to himself when the stranger had refused to declare he was Will's pimp - what else could he be? People like Will were weak. They fell into predatory hands all the time. Needed to be told what to do, where to be. The stranger was likely no different.

The doorbell ringing breaks Jack free of his thoughts, almost making him startle. He brushes his hand over the gun tucked into his jacket once more, and then sets forwards to answer the door. When he pulls it open, he does not expect to be greeted with the face waiting for him. He had not known what to expect, but it certainly wasn't *this* .

The other man is similar in age to him, Jack guesses. Tall, broad shouldered and handsome in an undeniable yet strange way. Amber eyes gaze at him from above lethal cheekbones.

"Mr. Crawford," the stranger smiles, the same honey coated voice filling the air between them. "Are you ready?"

Jack watches him carefully, nodding stiffly and stepping over the threshold onto the drive. He shuts the door behind him and places his hands in his pockets.

"I still don't know what to call you," Jack grinds out sourly, narrowing his eyes. "I don't do business with no-names."

The stranger smiles, revealing sharp teeth. "You may call me Hannibal."

Jack raises an eyebrow. What sort of fucking name was that? "Hannibal?"

"Yes. I come from a long line of first born sons bearing the same name. A very unfortunate European trait to have in the States, wouldn't you agree?"

Jack shrugs. "Not so bad if you want to be unforgettable."

Something gleams in Hannibal's eyes, and Jack immediately doesn't like it. Hannibal gestures for the waiting car and gives Jack a polite smile.

"Shall we?"

"Where did you say the hotel was that you're staying at again?" Jack asks as they take another turn he's unfamiliar with.

"I don't believe I did," Hannibal answers smoothly, unfazed, eyes on the road.

Jack clenches his teeth, hand flexing for his gun. "Where exactly is Will, by the way?"

"I didn't think you would be interested in Will's whereabouts. I didn't think you would particularly want to see Will ever again, from all he's told me."

“Oh yeah? And what exactly *did* he tell you?”

“He told me how he came to meet you. He told me about the porn shoots, the drugs and the parties. He told me about how you locked him in his bedroom for months and whored him out for pennies.”

“Because he crossed me by selling himself on Skid Row,” Jack mutters. “He wanted to play at being a whore, I let him know what it was really like.”

“He told me about how he escaped and went to Vegas.”

“And took all my fucking money with him,” Jack adds. “Let’s not forget about that part.”

“Will told me about how you tracked him down, had another man threaten him at gunpoint, and blackmailed him into paying back all the money he took by promising to have his only friend sent to a snuff shoot if he didn’t.”

Jack’s eyes narrow at that. “Is that the sob story he sold you? How did he even end up with you in the first place?”

Hannibal shoots him a dry look. “Do you care?”

“I’m just curious,” Jack replies, “as to how he wound up with you. I don’t understand why you’re willing to pay off his debt to me. That’s not the sort of thing pimps do.”

“You assume I’m his pimp.”

“What else could you be?” Jack laughs bitterly. “He’s a whore.”

Jack had been too absorbed in trying to pick apart Hannibal’s smooth, icy exterior to realise they’d pulled up to an abandoned office building, the rest of the street in a similar state of dilapidation.

“This isn't your hotel.”

“No, it’s not.”

The needle was plunging into his neck before Jack could take another breath, before he could reach for his gun. He chokes on his breath, claws at his throat, but Hannibal is pulling away calmly, smoothly. He deposits the needle back inside of his suit jacket and simply watches as Jack blindly tries to reach inside his jacket for his gun. The edges of Jack’s vision are turning dark, black spots swimming before him. His limbs feel like lead.

“What did you…what did you do?” Jack demands, his hand refusing to lift to where his gun is.

“A sedative,” Hannibal replies, his charming purr now a cold, flat tone. “Don’t try to fight it. You’ll need your strength for what’s to come.”

Jack ignores him, desperately still reaching for his gun, despite his body's refusal to obey. Eventually, his mind drags him under, and he slumps to the side, gasping for air. All he sees as the black around the edges of his vision closes in is the icy flint in those strange, amber eyes.

Hannibal leans over when he finally stills, checks his pulse and sighs. He doesn't waste a second more in getting out of the car and rounding the passenger side, beginning the task of dragging Crawford from the vehicle. His Will is waiting, after all.

Since I Was Born I Started To Decay

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Teenage Angst

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal watches Will like a hawk, fascinated by the sheer *hatred* burning in his irises, the way his jaw looks like it could snap at any moment it's clenched so hard.

It is *so* lovely to see the rage flaring underneath his beloved's skin as he waits for Crawford to regain his consciousness. The large man is still out cold, securely strapped and bound to the chair Hannibal had placed him on. There is a gag in Jack's mouth, drool beginning to soak into the rag from the way his head is slumped to the side.

Will has barely uttered more than few words to Hannibal since he dragged Jack up the fire escape stairs of the abandoned office building about an hour ago, wordlessly watching and helping Hannibal to tie Jack's restraints and fastidiously straighten each sharp blade and instrument laid out on the plastic wrap placed on one of the disused office desks.

They're on the fourth floor, the only floor of the derelict building with the ceiling and floorboards still intact, the rest of the building too dangerous for them to do what they needed to do without potentially dropping through a rotting piece of floor. The sun is starting to set, casting glorious hues of red and orange through the smashed glass of the windows. It makes Will's curls shine, his skin glow and his eyes blaze. He looks like an angel drenched in wrath.

Hannibal wants to paint him. He wants to sketch him, render him in charcoal, carve him out of marble as he is now, slowly circling Crawford as he waits. He looks like a wild animal waiting to attack, predatory and cunning. It's the anticipation of the violence curled in his muscles, the aggression and tension in his face and shoulders that's making Hannibal vibrate with excitement. He thinks back to the night he found Will perched over Frederick Chilton, his knuckles bleeding and glass buried in his face, glorious and covered in Frederick's gore and blood. He'd been transcendent to gaze upon that night; righteous, savage and wild eyed as his chest heaved.

What would he be this evening? Chilton had attacked Will at a vulnerable moment, and he had still brutalised the other man. How would Will appear when killing Crawford, with the man bound and helpless in Will's clutches?

Hannibal finds himself lost in thought, snapping out of his daze as he realises Jack is beginning to make muffled groaning sounds. Will goes *still* , deathly still, the way a jungle cat freezes in the undergrowth before pouncing. Hannibal can't help the grin that begins to spread across his mouth.

Jack blinks rapidly, a choked noise erupting from his throat, and his limbs jerk erratically. His head whips around, face contorting with confusion and then anger as he realises he is securely bound and cannot move, cannot speak.

And then, the delightful moment his eyes land on Will.

He begins roaring through his gag, fighting the sluggish haze the sedative still grips him with. He tries to rock forwards, tries to split free from the binds keeping him on the chair, but to no avail. There are veins beginning to bulge in his neck and forehead as he shouts and bellows beneath the gag at Will.

And Will, his darling, beautiful Will, simply steps forward with smouldering fury in his eyes.

“Hello, Jack,” Will murmurs, just as Jack takes a breath between his muffled shouting. “And here I was thinking I would never see you again. How things change.”

Jack cries something incomprehensible behind the gag, trying to lurch forwards again unsuccessfully. Will tuts softly, then reaches forwards and slips the gag from his mouth.

“You fucking *whore* !” Jack snarls, spit flying from his mouth. “What the fuck do you think you’re doing?!”

Will tilts his head to the side, observing the larger man. Hannibal simply reclines against the old office desk he is perched on, arms crossed over his chest and watches in delight as the scene unfolds.

“I’m going to kill you, obviously,” Will answers in that same soft, low voice. “You’ve had it coming after all, haven’t you Jack?”

“I swear to God Graham, you untie me right now or I’ll make it so you’ll never walk again,” Jack threatens.

Hannibal laughs aloud at that, genuinely amused.

Jack’s head whips around, straining to see Hannibal, then his face twists with fury at the sight of him. “You! You *lied* to me! Who even are you?!”

“It’s not my fault you were so gullible. Perhaps you shouldn’t have been so naive as to think this was all so you could be repaid the apparent debt you believe you’re owed,” Hannibal rebuts, gracefully shifting from his spot and sauntering over to Will.

He stands behind Will, arms slowly wrapping around him and his chin resting on Will’s shoulder. He strokes his hands over Will’s neck where the necklace he gifted him sits, along with the ring on Will’s finger that glints in the setting rays of the sun. Jack watches them wide-eyed in horror.

“You’re both insane,” Jack whispers, shaking his head. “You’re out of your minds. Get me out of this goddamned chair.”

Will turns his head to the side, nuzzling his nose against Hannibal's cheek. Hannibal shuts his eyes, savouring the gesture of affection for a moment and then meeting Will's lips, kissing him hard and purposefully. Jack makes a disgusted noise in front of them, but it only serves to make Will smile widely, stroking his hand along Hannibal's forearm where it's holding him around his middle.

"Go watch," Will whispers against his lips. "I want to start."

Hannibal slinks back into the shadows, amused at the ragged breaths Jack is taking as his eyes zero in on the array of blades waiting on the table next to him.

"Will," Jack grits out, "you're not really going to kill me. You're just toying with me, you're not… you don't have it in you. You're just trying to scare me."

Will begins to slowly step around Crawford in a wide circle, eyes glued on the larger man. "After what you did to me? You think scaring you is *enough* ? No, Jack. I'm going to do much more than just frighten you. You're going to suffer."

"I've suffered enough," Jack hisses, eyes narrowing. "Do you realise what it did to me when you stole that money?"

The first blow is unexpected, even for Hannibal - it sends Jack, however, reeling, head snapping back and breath choking his throat. Will strikes like a viper, out of blue and precisely. Crawford's nose emits a sickening *cracking* noise as it breaks.

"You don't know what suffering is," Will growls, shaking his hand out from the punch, continuing his circle around Crawford. "How dare you speak to me of suffering after everything you've done."

Jack gasps, tilting his head back and closing his eyes. "You deserved everything that happened to you."

Will laughs, dryly, darkly. Hannibal clenches his fists at the words but doesn't interfere; this is Will's kill, Will's retribution.

"You know, Jack, I began to think the same after a while too," Will retorts with a wicked grin. "I thought maybe I *did* deserve it all, but then I finally stopped hearing your poison in my ear and realised how cruel you are. I realised that you're a monster."

"Says the man trying to kill me!" Jack spits at Will, anger twisting his face into something ugly.

"You abused me for so long," Will deadpans, heading to the blades neatly arranged on the table, taking his time in selecting one after he pulls on a pair of surgical disposable gloves.

Both he and Hannibal are already wearing forensic grade overalls, covers on their shoes so as to not leave any shoe prints.

"Abuse?" Jack repeats, blood dripping from his broken nose.

“You saw me that day on the sidewalk, crying my eyes out,” Will murmurs quietly. “You saw me and how vulnerable, how *alone* , I was. And rather than leaving me the fuck alone like you *should* have done, you struck whilst the iron was hot. You used me, pushed me into porn, fuelled a drug addiction in me… and that wasn’t even the worst of it.”

“Oh yeah?” Jack snarls, trying to seem brave and laughing sarcastically. “Then what was the worst of it Will? Because you certainly weren’t complaining when you got hundred dollar bills slid into your back pocket or a gram of coke racked up for you.”

Will turns, a long, sharp knife in his hand. “The worst part, Jack, was when you let all those men and women into that locked room you kept me in and you charged them *pennies* to rape me. The worst part was when you threatened Matthew’s life.”

Jack’s eyes widen as Will closes the distance between them, the blade hovering right under Jack’s chin.

“The worst part,” Will breathes softly into Crawford’s ear, bending low, “wasn’t what you did to me. It’s what you did when you put that threat on Matthew’s life. Maybe I could have forgiven you if you hadn’t done that. But you decided to drag Matthew into the mess between us, and that, Jack, is why I can’t let you live.”

“ *Matthew* ?” Jack splutters, desperately trying to tilt his head away from the pointed end of the blade. “This all boils down to Matthew?”

Will’s free hand grasps Jack’s face in an unrelenting grip and he makes the first cut. A deep, long line across Jack’s left cheek. The bigger man hisses in pain, wriggling pathetically in his binds.

“You held me at gunpoint and made me watch that snuff video in the back of your car in Vegas,” Will snaps, “telling me that's exactly what would happen to Matthew if I didn’t pay you back.”

A second cut, identical to the one on Jack’s left cheek, appears on his right. Hannibal smiles at the crimson streaks that begin to pour down Jack’s face.

“You can’t be fucking serious,” Jack spits at Will through the pain. “There’s no way this about what I said I’d do to Matthew.”

“This has everything to do with him!” Will yells suddenly, composure disappearing.

He slashes at Jack’s shoulder, the blade opening up his skin. Jack bellows in pain.

“He was the only good thing I had! He was the only person in the world who cared about me and you were going to send him to slaughter!” Will screams, chest heaving, bringing the knife down again.

The blade plunges into Jack’s thigh. The noise Jack makes from the pain echoes throughout the abandoned building.

Will wrenches the knife out of his thigh, the spray of blood that follows hitting him across the neck and face. Hannibal immediately wants to lick it from his skin.

“Matthew was my *friend* ,” Will seethes, tears clouding his vision, “my *only* friend, the only one who helped me. He saved me from what you were doing to me. He was *good* , and you were going to end his life because your ego was hurt!”

Jack tips his bleeding head back and laughs, despite the pain searing through his face and leg. “Matthew is nothing but a filthy rent boy who would have sold you out for one hit off of the nearest pipe.”

Will steps back then, his face going blank. Jack watches him turn to something hidden in the shadows, the silence in the air beginning to feel stifling. When Will faces him again, his features are still blank in a way that makes Jack’s skin crawl with dread. It’s more terrifying than the sight of the knife plunging towards him.

And then, Jack sees what Will has brought forth into the light of setting sun. A tripod with a small video camera.

“The fuck is this?”

Will’s gaze lingers on the blood seeping from the stab wound on Jack’s thigh. “It’s exactly what it looks like.”

“You’re going to *film* yourself murdering me?”

Will reaches into his back pocket, pulling out a folded piece of fabric that he shakes into shape, revealing a black balaclava. Jack’s breath catches in his throat as Will pulls it over his head, concealing his face entirely except for a strip that reveals his eyes.

“I’m going to do to you exactly what you would have done to Matthew,” Will tells him softly. “Hannibal?”

“Darling,” Hannibal responds immediately, standing to attention.

“Would you pass me the garden shears and hold his mouth open for me?” Will asks so sweetly, as if he’s asking Hannibal to pass the salt.

“Of course,” Hannibal answers.

“Cover your face too. I wouldn’t want to risk your face being caught on film.”

Jack watches in horror as Hannibal dons his own balaclava and medical gloves, identical to Will’s, and then plucks up a metal mouth gag that will spread and keep Jack’s mouth open, along with a pair of lethal looking garden shears.

“What are you doing?” Jack whispers, his voice lost somewhere deep inside of him.

“I’m going to cut your tongue out,” Will informs him gently. “I wouldn’t want you saying anything incriminating on camera, would I? Plus it’ll make for such a good start to the film.”

“You’re going to sell the footage of my death?” Jack splutters, eyes bulging.

“Mmhmm,” Will hums slowly, dark eyes watching Hannibal approach Crawford. “To the exact same man you were going to sell the snuff film of Matthew’s death to. He calls himself the Dragon, if I remember rightly. Hannibal found his contact details in your phone whilst you were unconscious.”

“Will,” Jack pleads, breaking, “please just *think* , Jesus Christ. You don’t want to do this.”

“But I do,” Will disagrees, clasping his hands behind his back. “This is exactly what you would have done to Matthew. What could be fairer? Ido want you to know though, it’s really not my kind of thing. I think it’s deplorable - but you were willing to make a snuff out of Matthew’s torture and death, Jack. An eye for an eye, and all that.”

“But I didn’t do anything to Matthew!” Jack yells, rocking in his restraints. “I’ll give you his fucking address, you can go see for yourself that he’s *fine* !”

“We already got that from your cell too,” Will sighs. “Do you really expect me to believe that you didn’t hurt him after you found out he was the one who let me go?”

Jack flinches. “He recovered.”

Will’s eyes blaze with newfound fury. “So you hurt him. Beat him to within an inch of his life, I imagine, just like you did when you found me in Vegas. And to top it off, all these years, he’s had no idea of the threat hanging over his head.”

“I never would have done it!” Jack insists, sweating profusely as Hannibal begins to draw closer with the metal gag. “I wouldn’t have gone through with it, I swear! Matthew was never in any real danger, I just needed something to make you pay back the money!”

Will’s lip curls in disgust behind the balaclava, shaking his head and accepting the shears from Hannibal’s outstretched hand. “I don’t believe you. The fact you forced me to watch that snuff, the fact you have the Dragon’s number in your cell…”

“I swear,” Jack begins to sob, shaking. “I wouldn’t have done it. I *wouldn’t* . Please Will, it doesn’t have to be like this.”

“Just stop,” Will mutters, distaste marring his voice. “There’s nothing you can do, Jack. This is your final act of penance - of contrition - for everything you’ve done, everything you’ve threatened to do.”

“Will,” Jack tries to plead. “Please, *please* - ”

“Gag him,” Will commands quietly to Hannibal, interrupting Jack’s babbling.

Hannibal does so precisely, fluidly, without hesitation. Jack makes distorted groans immediately, shaking his head as if he can free himself from the device spreading his mouth open and his bleeding cheeks wide.

“Shall I start recording, beloved?”

Will nods. Hannibal turns the camera on, hits record. Will raises the shears and begins his work.

Jack's garbled screams, wet and gurgling, fill the abandoned floor of the office. His tongue severs from its root easily, like a knife cutting through butter, as Will clenches the shears together. The flesh drops onto Jack's lap, blood so dark it looks like tar gushing from his mouth.

Will's chest is heaving already, and he steps away, shears dripping with blood as he begins to circle Jack, watching him intently. Jack groans and sobs as he waits for the next wound to be inflicted.

They'd agreed it would be best not to speak whatsoever whilst the camera was recording. Anything that could be used to identify them needed to be avoided - it didn't make it any easier though, for Hannibal to hold back his frantic need to shower Will in praise and compliments as he watched his love begin his work on Crawford.

Jack's ears disconnect from his head between the shears next, dropping to the floor with a small *plop* . The neck of his shirt begins to stain crimson from the blood. Will smiles softly beneath the balaclava at the sight, and looks up at Hannibal to catch his gaze. Hannibal's eyes are *burning* with pride.

Will sets down the shears, picking up a pair of pliers. Jack shakes his head, pleading, tears running down his face. Will steps into his space, one hand using his thumb and forefinger to spread the skin under Jack's brow and beneath his eye wide. Will watches his iris and pupils flutter and flicker in panic, zeroing in on the pliers that raise to his line of sight.

" 'ease," Jack manages to warble out from his mutilated mouth, tongue missing.

Will ignores him, spreading the pliers and fixing the jaws on either side of Jack's eyeball. Jack is lost to his sobbing, his chest heaving, as Will secures his grip and *pulls* . Jack's eye rips from its socket in one fluid motion, the scream the larger man lets out ringing in all their ears. Will wastes no time in removing his remaining eye, letting it drop to the floor next to its twin and Jack's ears.

Crawford is hyperventilating now, twitching in the chair he's tied to. Will swaps the pliers for a scalpel and spreader device and crouches next to the arms of the chair where Jack's own arms are bound. He gently rolls up the sleeves of Jack's shirt up to his elbow, watching the veins pulse and bulge under his skin.

His blood looks so dark where it's splashed against the floor, stained into his clothes. Will stares at it a moment longer, admiring the way the setting sun rays gleam off the surface of the puddles of blood. He turns his attention back to Crawford's arms and then sets the scalpel to the flesh of his wrist. His skin gives easily, the sharp metal cutting through layers of skin and tendons. Jack's screams are growing weaker and weaker, more of a choked, babbling sob than anything else now.

Hannibal watches in adoration as Will sets the spreader device into the incision he's made above Jack's wrist, prying back the skin to reveal bone. He'd shown him how to do this exact

procedure on Chilton, when Will had expressed his desire to amputate Jack's hands. Will had been a quick learner; he managed to perform the procedure on Chilton's remaining hand after only watching Hannibal once.

In an operating room, there would have been devices and equipment to stem the bleeding to make it clearer to see where the bone needed to be sawn. Will seemed to manage, however. Letting Crawford bleed out was part of his design, after all.

Will retrieved the small bone saw from the table, watching Crawford's eyeless head begin to loll. Will struck him savagely across his lacerated cheek to bring him round for a few moments longer. Jack would inevitably pass out soon, either from blood loss or shock. Hannibal observed Will as he lowered the bone saw and began to drag it over Crawford's radius bone, severing it from the carpal bones of his lower hand. Jack's hand fell to the floor with a sickening, wet thud as Will's chest heaved.

The red light on the video camera kept blinking. Jack's other hand fell away shortly after the first, nothing left but bloody stumps at the ends of his wrists.

Will dropped the saw, and Hannibal observed the quake in his legs as he retreated from Jack. He pulled Will to him the minute he was within arms reach and out of view of the camera, holding him steadfast and cradling the back of his head in one large hand. Will clasped his arms around him like Hannibal was the only thing keeping him up. Hannibal kept his eyes on Jack's limp, bloody body in the chair behind them, and turned Will to look at him, still keeping his arms securely wrapped around the younger man.

Jack's body was a mess. His chest still rose and fell, sluggish and weak. He would be dead soon, from the way the blood was still seeping from his wrists, the stab wound on his thigh, the gore dribbling from his swollen lips. Around him, severed parts of his body lay on the floor like discarded items of clothing. An ear instead of a loosened tie, an eyeball in replacement of a castaway sock.

Will lost track of time as they watched Jack slowly bleed out. His head had dropped forwards, obscuring the view of his mutilated face from the camera - Hannibal could practically hear Will's teeth grinding as they noticed this. Will broke free from his hold and went back to Jack, lifting his head up and settling it to be slumped back slightly to the side, his injuries in plain view of the camera once more. Hannibal held his arms open for Will to step back into, and they resumed their watch of Jack's demise.

It was only when they realised that the sun had set and there were only a few dregs of murky Los Angeles daylight left that Hannibal stirred from their almost trance-like state and went to turn the camera off.

Will released a breath he didn't know he'd been holding when the camera stopped filming.

"Is he dead?" Will rasped, his voice scratching against the walls of his throat.

Hannibal placed his gloved fingers against the side of Jack's neck against his pulse point. He waited a minute to be sure, and then nodded.

“He’s gone,” Hannibal answered gently.

Will drew in a shuddering breath and wrenched the balaclava from his head. Then he slowly lowered himself to the floor, sitting with his knees drawn up and his arms resting against his knee caps. He let his head fall back, eyes closed.

Hannibal went to him, crouching before him and taking his hands in his.

“Don’t go inside, Will. Stay here with me.”

“Where else would I go?” Will whispered, eyes slowly opening and gazing at Hannibal.

Hannibal has nothing to say, for once. Instead he simply reaches forwards and kisses Will with such tender reverence that Will lets the tears brewing in his eyes fall.

Chapter End Notes

Writing this chapter probably made me look like a serial killer if anyone ever looks at my search history - anyone other Hannibal fans who write fanfics have this problem?? :')

This is it guys! The next chapter will be the last! Thank you so much for all your comments and kudos - people in this fandom are genuinely the best <3

Run Away From All Your Whoredom

Chapter Notes

Placebo - Slave to the Wage

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Los Angeles - The Dragon

Hannibal's hand does not leave the small of Will's back as the pair of them stand in the Dragon's dark, shadowy apartment. It's in a less savoury part of the city, one that Will is all too familiar with. The Dragon had been woefully easy to track down through Jack's cell.

The Dragon himself is a peculiar man. Peculiar because he makes a living - if you can call hiding away in this dank, claustrophobic apartment *living* - from creating and distributing snuff films, but every last mannerism of his unnerves Will. Will is unfazed by the cleft lip, the lisp, the nervous disposition; what unsettles him is the clear bloodlust thrumming through every cell of the man before them.

Hannibal merely finds him… *interesting* .

"This… is beautiful," the Dragon whispers, in awe.

Will tries not to think too deeply about how many levels of wrong it is that they're doing this; he doesn't care, doesn't feel guilty, but he is overwhelmingly aware of the fact this is the thick icing of *illegal and morally wrong* on the cake of Jake Crawford's death. Will mulls it over, turns it around in his mind; who's Will kidding? He's morally grey at the best of times.

"An artist in their element," Hannibal muses, turning his head and brushing his lips over Will's curls.

Will is unsure as to why Hannibal seems so relaxed around the Dragon, even if he is about to gleefully accept their footage of Jack's death and give them thousands upon thousands of dollars for it. Will thinks the Dragon is creepy. He's dangerous. But then again, so is Will. So is Hannibal, for all his glossy demeanour and high brow proclivities.

" *Oh* ," the Dragon gasps in wonder as the film shows Will removing Crawford's first hand. "He suffered so beautifully under your administration."

Will swallows; Hannibal *smiles* , like the cat that got the cream.

The film finally ends, and the Dragon slowly closes the lid of the laptop sitting on the decrepit looking coffee table in the dreary living room they're all in.

“Well?” Hannibal asks, amusement lilting in his voice. “Are you interested?”

The Dragon nods enthusiastically, just as Hannibal suspected he would. “Very. Very interested. I have to warn you though, it won’t gain as much ah… popularity, because neither of you fuck him - before, during *or* after. But it’s still exquisite.”

Hannibal’s lip curls in distaste. “I *did* pre-warn upon first contacting you the film would contain nothing of that nature.”

The Dragon’s eyes latch on to Hannibal, his pupils widening - Will isn’t sure if it’s arousal or anger. It could be both.

“Well, let’s settle this, shall we?” Will interrupts, clearing his throat. “How much?”

The Dragon scoffs at Will’s directness. “Straight to the point, aren’t you?”

Will returns his disdain with a flat, humourless smile. “You’ll have to forgive me. I’m a prostitute - I’m used to asking for my pay upright. Old habits, and all that.”

The Dragon stands, and Hannibal’s hand slides protectively around Will’s waist, drawing him closer. The Dragon pays them no heed, going directly to a battered looking safe in the corner of the room Will hadn’t noticed before, as it was so hidden in shadows. The Dragon crouches before it and fiddles with the access code. The door swings open and Will nearly chokes at the armfuls of cash the Dragon turns around with when he stands again.

Unceremoniously, the Dragon begins to count out taped wads of bills, tossing them onto the coffee table next to the closed laptop.

“One hundred. I think that’s fair enough.”

“One… one hundred thousand?”

A curt nod is the only answer Will receives.

Hannibal dips his head. “Thank you. It was a pleasure doing business with you.”

The large gym bag appears from nowhere, and then Hannibal is carefully transferring the wads of bills into the bag. Will stares in shock at the whole thing, blinking in disbelief. He wonders for a moment why on God’s green Earth the Dragon is living in this *hovel* of an apartment if he has this much cash laying around to exchange for all the sick and twisted footage that comes through his front door. Why not live a life of luxury, like some sort of fucking Mafia overlord or shady politician?

But then Will’s eyes are drawn back to the warped skin of the Dragon’s cleft lip, the nervous flicker of his eyes, and Will is *pulled* into the Dragon’s feelings against his will, tumbling headfirst into the rush of empathy he experiences.

The Dragon is *scared* . He feels inferior, terrified of never being loved or accepted. He loathes himself with a passion that is scorchingly hot and it nearly knocks Will sick. Hannibal seems to notice, aware of the way Will’s empathy has involuntarily gripped him with the

Dragon's tar-like self hatred. He brushes a hand over Will's cheek, sliding it along his skin to grip Will round the back of his neck.

"You're alright, beloved. We're leaving now."

Will simply nods, his skin crawling at the smell in this godforsaken apartment, the walls streaked with black mould and cobwebs and is that a fucking set of *dentures* sat on the -

"Pleasure doing business with you," Hannibal murmurs courteously, pulling Will with him towards the door.

"Thank you for your work," the Dragon lisps, already twitching his way back to the laptop to re-watch Jack Crawford's death. "Until next time. Or not."

There isn't another word exchanged between the trio, and then Will is being gently tugged back out into the dirty, polluted air swimming around this side of Los Angeles, but by *God* is it better than the foul atmosphere inside of the Dragon's lair.

"Will," Hannibal coos softly, tilting his face up to look at him. "It's done, my love. You did it. I'm so pr-"

"I need a fucking drink," Will cuts him off, stumbling away across the cracked slabs of the sidewalk. "Let's go."

Hannibal sighs, looking down at the bag and then back up at Will's retreating figure. "Please tell me it's not a dive bar."

It turns out it absolutely *is* a dive bar, but Hannibal makes the exception for Will.

Los Angeles - Matthew

Life has not been in any way shape or form kind to Matthew Brown. But the days pass, regardless. The years blur. Memories dissipate, like the faded ink tattooed into aged skin a lifetime ago. Blurry, barely recognisable, distorted, but there nonetheless.

But Matthew still thinks of those days in Jack's house with Will. Will, with his wild curls and vivid blue eyes, all beauty and naivety. How quickly that naivety had faded after a few months, once the itch for the next high became a permanent feature, the ache from all the shoots became a constant fixture. Matthew felt guilt, such immense guilt, for leading Will into that life. All he could do was make sure he stuck by him as much as he could once Will was well and truly caught up in the life - if Matthew hadn't looked out for him, god knows what could have happened in those early days.

And God knows what *did* happen to Will Graham after he fled L.A. Matthew's heart had sank at the sight of him limping out of the bedroom he'd been locked in, looking like death and trembling all over. But his *eyes* - his eyes still flared with righteous anger, indignant and furious. Matthew had to give it to him; most people would have shrivelled, resigned themselves to their fate. But not only did Will gather himself together and leave with nothing

but the clothes on his back to escape, he wounded Jack more than anyone had ever been able to. It had been bold and also, in Matthew's opinion, stupid, but Will had gotten his own back nonetheless.

And then he was gone. Never to be heard from again. Matthew had no way of knowing if he was still alive.

Matthew had left Crawford's house years ago - he was too used up for Jack's liking by the time he'd left. Jack still held a firm grip over Matthew's life, however, a clenched fist on his liberty. Any money he earnt turning tricks or the occasional shoot he managed to wrangle went to Jack, just as it always had. In return, Jack dropped off a steady supply of drugs and also had a handful of johns lined up for Matthew.

The switch from porn star to prostitute had hit Matthew hard. Turning to his vice, to whatever narcotics he could get his hands on, had helped make the transition a little more bearable.

When he hears the knock at his front door, it startles him. It can't be anyone other than Jack, because, well… he has no friends. No family. Just Jack and the drugs and the johns Jack procures for him. There is nothing else, nothing in between.

Matthew makes his way to the front door regardless, squinting to peer through the glass peephole in his front door.

There's no one there. So who…

Matthew frowns, opening the door, ready to yell at whatever kids are playing tricks. And then he sees it. Sees the non-descript, zipped up gym bag sat on his doormat with a little slip of paper tucked between the handles.

Matthew.

The writing looks familiar, but he doesn't know why. Matthew steps out, craning his neck to look up and down the street. But there's nothing, no one to see. Just the odd person crossing the road, the occasional car rolling by.

"What the fuck," he whispers under his breath, looking back at the bag.

When he crouches down, he takes the note and unfolds it. There's a brief message inside:

Matthew. I thought for such a long time about what to say, and nothing seemed right. I just want you to know I will never be able to make it up to you, or pay you back, for what you did for me. For how you saved me and then suffered because of it. I just hope this helps a little. It's yours, all of it. Get out of L.A. Go see somewhere new. Make a new life for yourself. I spent every day for the last seven years thinking about you. Hoping you're ok. Hoping you're alive. Take the money and go somewhere far away from here, Matthew. Be happy. You deserve to be happy after everything.

There's no name signing it off but… Matthew drops the note as if it had stung him, head whipping up and looking around frantically. Then, he wrenches the zip open on the bag at his

feet and nearly chokes on his breath.

“Holy *fuck* …” Matthew whispers, eyes widening.

Matthew stands up again, heart hammering in his chest, the money forgotten at his feet.

“Will?!”

Matthew takes off, jogging down the street, frantic.

“ *Will* !”

“Will! Where are you? Will, *please* !”

Nothing. Just strange looks from the few stray passers-by. Matthew’s chest heaves, and he slowly turns to look back at the bag, his eyes clouding with tears. On shaky legs, Matthew walks back to the bag, still not quite believing what is in front of him. He bends down, lifting the heavy bag and dragging it back inside, then stands on his doormat outside again.

“Will?”

His voice is hoarse, croaky. The tears spill.

“You motherfucker, Will Graham,” Matthew curses.

He falls to his knees next to the bag, unable to bring himself to start counting just exactly how much money is inside the bag. He grips the note in his hands and begins to laugh hysterically, still sobbing, curling in on himself in his grubby little apartment hallway.

Will was *alive* . He was out there somewhere, alive. And so was Matthew - and now he could get *out* , could pack a bag and leave and start somewhere new, away from Crawford and… Will was alive. Matthew’s chest ached at the knowledge. He’d wanted to see Will so badly, for so long, and had given up hope that Will Graham even existed anymore.

But he did. They both did. Both alive, both still here and kicking and God… even if he never did see Will again, wasn’t that just something?

Baltimore - Elijah

Elijah sighs as he scrubs at his eyes, still bleary with sleep. Coffee clutched in one hand and a stack of post in the other, he makes his way to the oversized cream leather sofa that takes up the vast majority of the sleek, open plan space of his living room and kitchen. Just the way he likes it.

Elijah yawns, flipping the TV on to half-listen to the morning news and half to have some background noise.

His mail is the usual. Bills, bills, bills and… a letter?

"*... six months after his disappearance, Doctor Frederick Chilton still has not been found. Authorities are now proposing that the case becomes a murder investigation, rather than a missing persons…"*

Elijah snorts, shaking his head as he looks up at the flat screen mounted on the wall in front of him. "I coulda told 'em that. Good riddance."

Elijah turns his attention back to the letter in his hands, frowning at the number of stamps across the front. Is that the word 'Italia' stamped into the ink? He slips a finger under a loose edge of the seal as the news anchor begins to mention another missing persons case.

Some guy in Los Angeles. Carter, or Carlson, or something like that… Elijah is too absorbed in opening the letter to listen properly.

Dear Elijah,

Just know I cringed incredibly hard writing 'Dear' to you. You're not dear. You're a bastard.

Anyway. As much as you're a bastard, I am, for some reason, fond of you and felt somewhat inclined to let you know for the sake of decency that I won't see you again. I'll be out of your hair for good. Which I suppose you'll be glad about, as I'm fully aware of what a bastard I also am, but I guess you'll miss me just a little bit. We both begrudgingly care for each other, after all, don't we? Plus, I was your best boy - don't even try and deny it. I expect you'll go bankrupt without me now. Whatever will the rich and wealthy of Baltimore do now that everyone's favourite escort has skipped town? Good luck with your impending descent into poverty now you're not selling my ass. Perhaps you'll have to sell that obnoxious fucking sofa of yours to tide you over for a while.

I've gone to Europe. With Hannibal. Obviously. Apologies for not formally handing in my notice of leave, but I suppose this will have to do.

We're moving about, so by the time this letter reaches you, we probably will have moved on from Italy. Hell, we might even be married by the time you read this. We both somehow proposed to each other on the same day, at the same time. Romantic, I know. We're thinking of tying the knot in Sweden. You're not invited, by the way.

I don't expect to hear back from you, and I don't particularly want to either, which is why I didn't leave a forwarding address. No offence, of course - I'm just trying to leave the whole escort/prostitute thing behind. I thought you'd be pleased I'm at the 'moving on and starting afresh' point in my life.

I'm sorry for being such a burden on you at times. I am grateful for everything you did. For picking me up, quite literally, out of the gutter. But I'm done now, Elijah. For good. I found my reason for living again, as much as you don't trust Hannibal as far as you can throw him. (Which wouldn't be very far at all, he weighs a fucking tonne.)

Go get yourself a girlfriend. Or a boyfriend. Whatever you're into, I guess (seeing as you always brushed off that topic of conversation between us). I just hope you find your Hannibal one day. Thank you for being a decent guy, Elijah. (Still a bastard though.)

Addio, as they say in Italy.

- Will

(PS, Hannibal said I have to send you a photo of our wedding day, so I guess you will hear from me again, but that's it then, ok? He said something about proving his point to you. Whatever.)

Elijah drops the letter in amazement. Picks it up, reads it again. Then bursts into laughter, eyes crinkling in the corners and grinning from ear to ear.

And then he promptly spits his coffee all over the white leather sofa, staining the cream fabric cushion covers, when he looks up at the TV.

A photo of a man he doesn't recognise, but whose name *he knows* . The penny does not drop - the penny plummets and crashes with the force of a meteor.

'JACK CRAWFORD: LAST SEEN 3 MONTHS AGO, APRIL. CURRENT WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN. POSSIBLE MURDER INVESTIGATION TO BE OPENED.'

"Oh *shit* ."

Fin

Chapter End Notes

It's done :'((((

I honestly had no idea where I was going with this fic (that's usually the case) but I'm honestly so happy so many of you have enjoyed this, left kudos and commented.

I know the ending probably isn't what a lot of people wanted, but I felt like this version of Hannibal and Will I wrote was so chaotic and unpredictable it felt right to end the story with Elijah sitting in his PJs with his morning coffee and seeing a newsreel about

Jack being murdered <3 The way I write is picturing every scrap of the story as a movie, and in my head, if this was a film, it would end with the three shots of the Dragon, Matthew and Elijah.

Thank you again so much for all the love!! I'm currently in the process of starting my next fic (which involves me spending every spare minute I have reading about demonology and angelology???) because this next Hannigram fic is going to be spooky and a little weird <3

See ya next time xo

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!